

SUPERVISING BUILDING WORK

Supervising building work properly is essential. Recent research found that at least 60% of seriously defective domestic building work reported to QBCC is the result of poor supervision.

Why is supervision so important?

Poor supervision often leads to defective building work which can cause significant financial impact on the contractor. Rectifying defective or substandard building work means increasing costs and reducing profits.

In some cases, the financial impact of poor supervision has forced businesses to close or declare bankruptcy.

Do contractors also have a legal requirement to supervise building work?

Under the *Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991* (QBCC Act), a licensed contractor must ensure that building work done under their licence is adequately supervised.

If this obligation is not met, the licensed contractor will be charged with an offence (penalties vary depending on the severity of the offence).

What is meant by 'adequate supervision'?

'Adequate supervision' in the QBCC Act means work is properly overseen to ensure that it meets the:

- plans and specifications of the work set out in the contract between the licensed contractor and client
- standard expected of a competent contractor of the appropriate licence class.

Adequate supervision does not necessarily mean that a supervisor must be onsite when every job is being done. The requirement depends on how complex the work is, as well as the skills of the tradespeople involved.

In some cases, a supervisor may not be watching over the work as it is happening, but it is critical that the supervisor checks the work to make sure it meets the requirements of the Building Code of Australia and any related Australian Standards, plans and specifications of the contract, and achieves an appropriate level of workmanship.

At a minimum, QBCC recommends inspections at these stages:

- When structural stages of construction are completed (footing, slab, frame and final)
- Before the start of significant non-structural stages of construction (e.g. at pre-paint, before fixing stage, or before plasterboard or cladding is fixed)
- Before handover to the consumer
- At other times as needed.

How can supervisors adequately supervise work?

There are many factors to take into account to make sure that building work meets the plans and standards.

The table on the following pages is a guide to the main items that should be checked when constructing a new building. Some parts of the guide may also be useful for undertaking renovations.

Need more information?

For licensing details and other useful information, visit www.qbcc.qld.gov.au or call QBCC on 139 333.

Stage	Item
Pre-construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory approvals obtained (e.g. development permits for building work, operational works, plumbing, town planning etc)
Site identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site description and boundary alignments verified
Site works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct level of building platform established Earth batters or retaining walls established Required fill compaction achieved
Building set out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set back from titled boundaries accord with approval documents Building footprint reflects approval and contract documents
Footings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory inspections undertaken and approved by relevant approving authority Relevant plumbing and drainage inspections undertaken and approved by relevant authority Excavation, steel reinforcement, concrete placement and compaction accords with approval and engineering documents
Slab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory inspection undertaken and approved by relevant approving authority Plumbing and drainage inspections undertaken and approved by relevant approving authority Steel reinforcement, concrete placement and compaction, construction and control joints accord with approval and engineering documents Finished slab level accords with any minimum levels set by local government (e.g. flood, overland flow) Termite management system in place
Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory inspection undertaken and approved by approving authority Frame set out and dimensions accord with approval documents All structural elements and wind bracing accord with approval documents Ceiling heights and door widths accord with the contract documents and minimum standards set by legislation Wall and ceiling framing is plumb and square
Plumbing works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing rough-in inspection undertaken and approved by approving authority Position of final fixtures accord with contract documents
Electrical works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical supply authority requirements satisfied Smoke detector locations accord with approval documents Position of final electrical fittings accord with contract documents
Window and external door joinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External window and door fitments meet correct wind loading requirements External window and door flashings in place Correct glass used in areas of human impact risk Installation and glazing certificates obtained

Stage	Item
External cladding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulation, construction and control joints correctly positioned • Wall cavities cleaned • Weepholes clear and correctly positioned • Damp proof courses in place • External cladding waterproofed where required • Brick cladding plumb
Drainage	
Roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof fixings in place and correct for wind category • Sarking correctly lapped and placed • Flashings in place and of compatible materials • Minimum falls and laps to sheet roofs correct • Roof drainage and downpipes located in accordance with approval documents
Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downpipe connections adequate for soil conditions • Roof water discharge to approval authority's satisfaction • Site drainage falls adequate • Site drainage discharge to approving authority's satisfaction
Internal finishes	
Plaster-board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame checked prior to plaster fixing • Required back blocking in place • Expansion and control joints correctly located • Selected class of finish achieved in accordance with contract documents
Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-paint inspection carried out to ensure adequate surface • Correct paint type used for internal and external environment • Selected finish accords with contract documents
Final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory inspection undertaken and approved by relevant approving authority • Relevant certification obtained and provided to relevant approving authority
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driveways constructed with appropriate falls, control and construction joints and surface finishes