

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying webinar

Questions and answers

Thank you to those who attended the Board's webinar on self-certification on Monday, 17 November 2025. A recording of the webinar is posted on the [Board's YouTube channel](#).

Thank you to everyone who submitted a question during the webinar. There were some excellent points raised, and while we covered as many as we could on the day, we didn't have time to get through them all. To make sure you have as much information as possible about self-certification, we've answered all of your questions below.

Please note: The answers to these questions are based on the information the Board knows at this point in time. Some of the detail of the scheme has yet to be determined so some of the answers to the questions may change as a result of changes to the [Building and Construction Sector \(Self-Certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers\) Amendment Bill](#) and regulations to be made under that Bill.

Eligibility

Q: Who can self-certify?

A: Practitioners will have to meet eligibility criteria to apply for an endorsement to certify their work. The Board will set the eligibility criteria through a *Gazette* notice. Practitioners will be required to be certifiers, have undergone training on how to inspect and certify their work, have the right recordkeeping and business systems in place to support self-certification, and have the right insurance to cover their work such as public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Q: Will the Board consult with BCAs on practitioner eligibility?

A: The Board will consult with all appropriate parties as part of setting eligibility criteria. However, individual eligibility decisions will be for the Board to make. The Board will also audit and monitor the work of practitioners endorsed to certify their work.

Opt-in scheme

Q: Is the scheme voluntary? Can I opt out?

A: The scheme is voluntary, and practitioners will need to actively apply and show they meet the eligibility criteria to opt-in. Practitioners who do not certify their own work will still need to have their work inspected and approved by BCA inspectors.

Q: Can I opt in for some jobs and opt out for others?

A: Yes. A practitioner who is endorsed to certifying their own work can choose whether they will do so in any case. If the practitioner chooses not to certify a consented job, it will need to be inspected and approved by a BCA inspector in the usual way.

Q: What happens in no one opts in?

A: If no practitioners opt in to certify their work, work will continue to be inspected and approved by BCA inspectors in the usual way. The Chief Executive of MBIE is responsible for monitor the application and effectiveness of the scheme.

How will the scheme work

Q: What changes at the building consent stage?

A: The person applying for the consent decides whether they want to have their plumbing and drainlaying work inspected and approved by the BCA or certified by an endorsed practitioner. If they want the work to be certified by the practitioner, they must ensure their practitioner is endorsed to certify their work and get a written declaration from them confirming that the work is self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying. They must then provide the declaration, along with the name of the self-certifying practitioner, to the BCA as part of their consent application.

The BCA will check that the plumbing or drainlaying work complies with the Building Code but otherwise relies on the declaration from the practitioner that the work can be self-certified.

Q: What happens during the job?

A: The endorsed plumber or drainlayer carries out or supervises the work in the usual way including testing, commissioning, and recording the work. They then issue a certificate of compliance for the work which includes all the necessary supporting documentation. The certificate is then provided to the homeowner, BCA, and the Board within 10 working days,

Q: How does the Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) get issued?

A: Where plumbing or drainlaying work has been self-certified the BCA will accept the certificate as proof that the work complies with the building consent and will issue the CCC if all other consent requirements are met.

Q: What exactly changes for the BCA?

A: The BCA will still be required to review the consent application and determine whether the work, including any self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying complies with the Building Code. If it does, the BCA will issue the consent in the usual way. The BCA will still conduct all other required inspections for the work other than for plumbing and drainlaying. Once the build is complete, the homeowner will provide the BCA will all the required consent documentation including certificates for plumbing and drainlaying, and the BCA will issue a CCC in the usual way.

Q: If a BCA refuses to accept a certificate of compliance will the dispute go to the BCA or the Board?

A: Disputes about building consent matters are covered by the Building Act and may be referred to MBIE.

The Board can consider complaints about the competence of a practitioner, whether they were endorsed to certify their work, where they may have failed to issue a certificate or where there are problems with the accuracy of the certificate.

Q: Will BCAs still inspect or audit work?

A: BCAs will continue to inspect work that is carried out by a practitioner who is not endorsed to certify their work or where the work does not meet the definition of self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying. BCAs may also inspect work if the homeowner chooses not to have their plumbing or drainlaying work self-certified.

Q: Will the Building Code or licensing change?

A: No, there won't be any changes to licensing for plumbers or drainlayers and nothing in the Building Code will change. All building work will also continue to have to comply with the Building Code in the usual way. The only thing that changes is whether the plumbing or drainlaying work is inspected by the BCA or certified by an endorsed practitioner.

Q: What happens if someone works for themselves but isn't a certifier – can they self-certify?

A: No, only certifying practitioners will be able to be endorsed to certify work. Practitioners who are not eligible for an endorsement or who do not hold an endorsement will need to continue to have their work inspected by the BCA in the usual way.

Q: Can I certify my plumbing work but still request drainage inspections?

A: Yes, practitioners can choose to apply for an endorsement to self-certify plumbing, drainlaying, or both. Even if a practitioner is endorsed to certify their work, they can still elect to have work inspected in any case.

Practitioners will need to discuss what they can certify and what they are willing to certify with consumers at the very beginning as consumers must identify whether work will be self-certified when they submit their consent application to the BCA.

Q: What if the as-built differs from the consent (e.g. product substitution or layout changes)?

A: It is likely that endorsed practitioners will be able to make minor variations to consented plans and still certify the work providing they record the variations on the certificate. This is similar to how building inspectors can approve minor variations during an inspection. However, if the change is not minor or the practitioner isn't sure, they should discuss the situation with the BCA as the homeowner may need to seek a variation to their consent.

Q: What records will plumbers and drainlayers be expected to keep?

A: Practitioners will be expected to keep all the documentation they provided in support of the certificate such as as-builts, test results, photographs and product information. Practitioners should also keep their work records for each job. Further information about recordkeeping requirements will be supplied when the Board sets the eligibility criteria.

Q: Will photos of work be uploaded for certification?

A: Yes, practitioners will be required to provide location-identified photographs of key parts of the job such as test results.

Q: Will the scheme include granny flats (70m²) and how will the councils be notified?

A: No, granny flats are not included in the self-certification scheme because they do not require a consent. Self-certification will only apply to plumbing and drainlaying work that requires a building consent.

Q: Will supervision need to be general or direct?

A: Supervision requirements for work that will be self-certified will not differ from the usual supervision requirements set out in the [Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006](#) and the [Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers \(Registration and Licensing\) Notice 2025](#). However, because supervisors will be certifying the work, they should take extra care to ensure they supervise and inspect the work carefully.

Q: Is the Board consulting with Master Plumbers?

A: The Board will consult with all interested stakeholders including Master Plumbers about the parts of the scheme it will set through a *Gazette* notice.

The Board understands that Master Plumbers has had a number of meetings with both the Minister and MBIE about the self-certification scheme.

Q: Will I be able to self-certify a three-storey unit with a 42 FU total?

A: The regulations which will define self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying have been consulted on but no final decisions about the definitions has been made yet. That decision is expected by the end of 2025 – beginning of 2026. However, on the definitions MBIE consulted on, a 42 FU property would not meet the definition of self-certifiable plumbing and would likely have to be inspected by the BCA.

Q: Will solar heating be self-certifiable?

A: Based on the definitions that MBIE consulted on, solar heating, or any uncontrolled heat source, could not be self-certified due to the increased risk with such systems.

Q: Will pumped foul water in a basement be self-certifiable?

A: Based on the definitions MBIE consulted on, pumped systems could not be self-certified: only gravity-fed systems.

Q: Will I be able to self-certify onsite wastewater dispersal fields or mechanical drainage?

A: It is likely that this type of work will be outside the definition of self-certifiable drainlaying due to the increased risks associated with it.

Q: Will I be able to self-certify private drainage systems?

A: It will depend on the final definition of self-certifiable drainlaying, but the definition will apply to all private drainlaying work (though not civil work).

Certificates of compliance

Q: What does the certificate need to include?

A: The content of certificates will be set in regulations to be made under the Bill so it is not certain yet what that will be. However, MBIE consulted on the proposed content of certificates in August 2025 and the content is likely to include details of where the work is, when it was done, who did the work, who is certifying the work, and what the work involved. Supporting information such as photos, test results, and as-builts will be included with the certificate.

Certificates along with supporting information will have to be lodged on the self-certification register within 10 working days and provided to the homeowner, BCA, and the Board.

It will be a disciplinary offence to fail to provide the certificate within the required timeframe, to provide a false or misleading certificate, or fail to provide a certificate at all.

Q: Can practitioners use their own forms if the required information is included?

A: The Board will prescribe the form of the certificate, and all practitioners must use this form. Practitioners will not be able to lodge certificates if they are not on the Board's form.

Q: Will there be a template and an online portal?

A: Yes, the Board will prescribe the form of the certificate, and it will be lodged on the online self-certification register.

Audits, oversight and enforcement

Q: What safeguards prevent misuse – how do audits work for the Board?

A: The Board will have new powers to audit certificates, and this will be both risk based and random audits of certificates and supporting documentation.

In addition, a new disciplinary offence will be created of failing to provide a certificate within 10 working days. An existing disciplinary offence will also allow the Board to take action where an endorsed practitioner has issued a false or misleading certificate or failed to issue a certificate at all. It will also be a criminal offence to claim a practitioner is endorsed to certify their work when they are not.

New, higher penalties will also be introduced for false certificates, falsely claiming to be able to certify work.

Finally, the Board will still have all of its usual complaint and investigation powers which will also apply to the certification of work, and the Board will have a new disciplinary power to suspend or cancel a practitioner's endorsement.

Q: What specific audit controls will the Board use to detect issues – especially where someone signs off work for a plumber/drainlayer who does not hold an endorsement?

A: The Board's audit role will focus on the certificates issued along with the supporting information with each certificate such as photos and test results. The audit can consider any or all of the following things:

- whether the practitioner was endorsed to certify the work either because they did the work themselves or it was carried out under their supervision
- the certificate had been completed correctly and in time
- the supporting information is included, is correct, and supports the certification
- the work complies with the building consent
- the work complies with the building code
- the practitioner has kept all required records.

If the Board discovers any issues through an audit, it will discuss its findings with the practitioner and will work with them to upskill them around their certification practices.

If the Board considers there has been any serious misconduct in relation to a practitioner's certification of work, it may conduct an investigation and discipline the practitioner if appropriate. This could include, at the most serious end, cancelling or suspending their self-certification endorsement.

The Board can also receive complaints in the usual way about a practitioner's certification practices.

Q: What if a BCA observes obvious non-compliance (e.g. doesn't match the consent) during an inspection?

A: BCAs will retain the power to issue notices to fix for plumbing and drainlaying work they consider to be non-compliant even if they are not inspecting the work. Notices to fix will still need to be complied with by self-certifying practitioners and they should record on the certificate that the work complies with the consent and any notices to fix issues by the BCA.

Q: Why focus on auditing instead of higher entry standards?

A: Eligibility requirements only determine who can obtain an endorsement. They cannot show how an endorsed practitioner is performing their certification work. Auditing will allow the Board to

monitor how practitioners who are endorsed are carrying out their work and will enable the Board to identify and respond to issues with the practice of self-certification.

Q: How will the Board protect consumers from bad faith actors (beyond audits)?

A: In addition to auditing which will help the Board to identify and address poor certification practices, consumers will be able to check the public register to determine whether a practitioner can certify their own work and make complaints about practitioners' work, including their certification practices, in the usual way. If required, the Board can cancel or suspend a practitioner's endorsement.

As a new scheme, the Board will also be monitoring self-certification overall to identify any wider issues with the scheme in practice which it will report to the Chief Executive of MBIE who is responsible for the overall operation of the building consent system.

Q: What enforcement tools will the Board use for certification abuse?

A: The Board will have a range of enforcement tools available to deal with self-certification ranging from advice and information at the lower end of non-compliance, through education and mandatory upskilling, to cancellation or suspension of a practitioner's endorsement at the most serious end of the scale. There is also a new criminal offence for misrepresentation in relation to self-certification such as a person claiming they can certify work when they cannot.

Liability and insurance

Q: Who will be liable for self-certified work?

A: The practitioner who carried out the work and the practitioner who certified the work (if the work was carried out under supervision) will be liable for the work.

BCAs can rely on certificates issued by endorsed practitioners for their purposes (issuing code compliance certificates).

Q: Will insurance be required and at what levels?

A: The Bill will require the Board to set eligibility criteria around "adequate means". This means the ability to meet any civil liability arising from their work. It is likely that the Board will require some level of insurance such as professional indemnity and public liability insurance. But the Board will consult on what insurance is appropriate, and the level of that insurance when it consults on the eligibility criteria.

A survey the Board put out in August this year showed high levels of practitioner support for insurance cover of \$1-2million for residential work or scaled cover depending on job size and turnover.

Q: Why is insurance a requirement when it doesn't relate to plumbing competence or the Board's remit?

A: Insurance is about recognising that practitioners are taking on an additional assurance role as part of the building consent process. Self-certification will replace BCA inspections, so it is appropriate that practitioners doing this have adequate insurance to cover both themselves and homeowners in relation to this role. Insurance also addresses any civil liability that may arise in relation to self-certified work. As civil matters are outside the Board's authority to deal with, requiring insurance will ensure that practitioners and homeowners have a means for addressing civil liability in relation to the certification of work.

Q: Do consumer protections still apply?

A: Yes, all the usual consumer protections will continue to apply. That includes that all work must comply with the Building Code, Building Act warranties will still apply, and consumers will still have their same rights under any other legislation that may apply such as the Consumer Guarantees Act 1993, Fair Trading Act 1993, or Construction Contracts Act 2002.

Q: How long must insurance be held (1 year, 5 years, 15 years)?

A: This will be considered when the Board consults on the eligibility requirements early next year.

Q: How long does the certificate last and how long will the certifier be liable for defects?

A: The certificate is a permanent record of the work. Liability for the work will be determined by the applicable warranty periods in the Building Act regardless of whether the work was inspected by the BCA or self-certified.

Q: Could the Board be held jointly liable for defective work certified by an endorsed plumber or drainlayer?

A: No, the Board's role is to regulate and oversee the self-certification scheme including auditing certificates, receiving complaints about endorsed practitioners and disciplining them in appropriate cases. However, endorsed practitioners will be liable to consumers for the work they carry out and self-certify.

Complaints and disputes

Q: What happens when things go wrong?

A: That will depend on what goes wrong. If the BCA doesn't issue a code compliance certificate, that will be a matter for the BCA and MBIE to resolve. The Chief Executive of MBIE will also have responsibility for monitoring the operation of the self-certification scheme.

The Board:

- will have powers to audit endorsed practitioners certificates

- can receive complaints about endorsed practitioners both in relation to their work and their certification of any work
- can bring criminal charges against any person claiming to be able to self-certify when they can't
- will report to the Chief Executive of MBIE on the scheme for the purpose of them monitoring how the scheme is functioning.

Homeowners will have all the protections that currently exist in relation to building work including the Building Act warranties and other civil rights they may have under legislation such as the Fair Trading Act 1993, Consumer Guarantees Act 1993, and Construction Contracts Act 2002.

Q: What protections exist for a homeowner if the self-certifying practitioner becomes uncontactable or leaves the country?

A: The certificate for the work remains as an enduring legal record of the work carried out, how it was carried out, and by who. Homeowners also have the protection of the Building Act warranties and any other consumer protection that applies to them under other legislation such as the Fair Trading Act 1993, Consumer Guarantees Act 1993, and Construction Contracts Act 2002.

There is no time limitation on making complaints to the Board about a registered practitioner and the Board can still investigate and, in appropriate cases, take action against practitioners.

Fees and funding

Q: How will the scheme be funded – what fees should plumber and drainlayers expect?

A: Being fully funded by practitioner fees and levies, the Board will need to fund the operation of the self-certification scheme through a fee and levy from practitioners who opt-in to the scheme. The fee will cover the costs of the application process, considering and issues endorsements, and managing the certificate register. The levy will cover the Board's auditing function. The costs of building the certificate register and making necessary changes to the Board's practitioner database to support the scheme will be funded from Crown funding.

Practitioners will pay to participate in the scheme, but not to establish the scheme which will be funded by the Government.

Q: Will there be an audit levy/fee? How much will it be? How often will I have to pay it?

A: Because the Board must fund the operation of the scheme there will be an application fee and a levy to fund the auditing of self-certification. At this stage, the Board does not know how much the fee and levy may be. However, the Board will consult with practitioners before finalising the fee and levy.

Q: If all certifying plumbers and drainlayers opt in, what would the cost look like?

A: Because the Board operates on a cost recovery model, the cost of the fee and levy will be the cost of operating the self-certification scheme whatever they are. It is possible that more practitioners participating could make the costs for each practitioner lower through economies of scale. However, this will depend on what the costs of operating the scheme will be.

The Board will consult with practitioners on the proposed before finalising the fee and levy.

Q: Will practitioners have to pay two fees or levies to get an endorsement in both trades?

UPDATED A: No, it is likely that it will be a single fee for the endorsement regardless of whether it is for one or two trades. This is because it is a processing fee and the cost of processing an application is the same whether it is for one or two trades.

Q: Why should plumbers or drainlayers pay for setup costs of the scheme or its additional levies?

A: Practitioners will not pay for any set up costs for the scheme. The Government will fund these. The only fees practitioners will have to pay will be to apply for and be granted an endorsement and this will only be paid by the practitioners who choose to opt into the scheme. The levy is necessary to fund the additional function of auditing self-certification work.

Q: What is the incentive for practitioners to opt-in if it will increase costs?

A: Practitioners will need to weigh any benefits for them of being able to certify their work against any increased costs. For some practitioners, having greater control over being able to inspect and certify their work themselves without the need to arrange BCA inspections will be of benefit and will be worth any additional costs. For practitioners who do not see the benefit or who consider any benefits are outweighed by the costs, they can choose not to opt into the scheme and continue to have their work inspected by the BCA.

Training and continuing professional development

Q: Will there be training provided by the Board? What topics will it cover?

A: Practitioners wanting to opt into the scheme will be required to do some additional training relevant to their new responsibilities for inspecting and certifying work. It is likely that the training will cover topics such as the building consent process and how to deal with minor variations and amendments with self-certified work, quality assurance processes, inspecting work for certification processes, completing certificates and recordkeeping for certification purpose, and disputes management and understanding liability.

Q: Will training be online or in person?

A: The Board is exploring flexible options for the delivery of the required training including through online modules and webinars. The Board will confirm the final format in early 2026 but the goal is to make the training as easily accessible for practitioners as possible. The Board will also continue to provide general information about the self-certification scheme through its annual CPD programme.

Q: Why not automatically endorse all certifying practitioners (with training) instead of charging a fee?

A: The scheme the Government is proposing does not allow for automatic endorsements. Certifying practitioners who wish to certify their work will have to apply and be granted an endorsement by the Board. Self-certification of plumbing and drainlaying for building consent purposes represents a new role for practitioners and some practitioners may not wish to be responsible for inspecting and certifying their own work or may not have the additional skills or capability for this work.

The fees are to cover the new work the Board will have to carry out receiving applications for an endorsement, processing those applications, recording endorsements on the public register, auditing certificates, and being responsible for enforcement in relation to the self-certification of work.

Timeline

Q: When does all this start?

A: The Bill to make the necessary changes to the Building Act and Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act to establish the scheme was introduced to Parliament on 11 November 2025. The Bill is likely to be passed in March 2026. MBIE will still need to make regulations setting out some of the detail of the scheme and the Board will have to issue a notice setting out things like the eligibility criteria, setting any terms and conditions on endorsements, prescribing the form of the certificate, setting the fee and levy. The targets go live date is **30 June 2026**.

Q: What can I do now to start preparing?

A: Make sure your contact details are current and correct and keep an eye on the Board's website for information about self-certification including further seminars as more information becomes available.

You may want to make a submission to the select committee about the proposed self-certification scheme. You can find a copy of the Bill by clicking on this link – [copy of self-certification Bill link](#) and information about how to make a submission by clicking on this link - [how to make a submission](#). Submissions must be made by 11.59pm, Thursday 8 January 2026 and clicking on this link will take you to the website where you can make a submission – [make my submission](#).

You can also review your recordkeeping practices, your work systems, and your current insurance arrangements to see how well placed you are to apply for an endorsement when the scheme begins.

Q: What is the expected timeline from application to approval?

A: The Board will be in a better position to advise on this once the necessary work has been done in the practitioner database to allow for endorsements and applications for them. However, the Board expects to be able to process applications and grant endorsements promptly. The Board will share more information with practitioners about the application process and requirements as soon as we are able to.