Things you need to know if you want to put a shed in your back yard

We suggest you do some research before purchasing your shed or starting construction. It’s also a good idea to talk to our Building Services and Planning staff.

We also advise you to talk to your neighbours before you begin so they are aware of your plans (their permission may also be required). Aim for a design and location which is acceptable to you and your neighbours.

In this document, the term ‘shed’ will be used to cover a range of structures including detached buildings and roofed enclosures.

Legal aspects you need to know under the Building Act 2004.

1. It is likely that the shed will be defined as a building (section 8).
2. Construction of the shed will be building work (section 7).
3. Some classes of building work are exempt from the need for building consent. The exemption in Schedule 1 of the Building Act that applies to sheds is exemption 3 for ‘Single-storey detached buildings not exceeding 10 square metres in floor area’. If you want to use this exemption your shed must meet all of the following criteria:
   
   (a) Be no more than one storey (being a floor level of up to 1m above the supporting ground and a height of up to 3.5m above the floor level).
   
   (b) Not exceed 10sq m in floor area.
   
   (c) Not contain sanitary facilities, such as a toilet, or facilities for the storage of potable water, such as a plumbed water supply.
   
   (d) Not include sleeping accommodation, unless the building is used in connection with a dwelling and does not contain any cooking facilities.
   
   (e) Be no closer than the measure of its own height to any residential building or to any legal boundary. For example, a shed with a roof of 2m at the highest point must be a minimum of 2m from a house or boundary.
   
4. If the shed falls outside these exemptions, a building consent will be required and possibly resource consent.
5. Whether you need building consent or not, you must make sure the work complies with the New Zealand Building Code. While you need to comply with all relevant sections, the four most likely to be applicable for sheds are:
   
   • B1 Structure.
   • B2 Durability
   • C/AS1 Fire resistance ratings
   • E1 Surface water.

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the Building Act and Schedule 1 exemptions. Copies of the Act and exemptions, and further information, are available at www.mbie.govt.nz. You are also welcome to call us on 03 477 4000 or visit the ground floor of the Civic Centre and talk to our staff.