

Retrofitting thermal insulation into existing buildings

Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 states that building work in connection with the installation of thermal insulation into an existing building is exempt from requiring building consent **unless it is in an external wall or an internal wall that is a firewall**. Therefore, insulation of external walls requires building consent unless a specific project is granted a discretionary exemption.

The Dunedin City Council (DCC) will consider exempting insulation of exterior walls in circumstances such as:

- Where injected or blown in products with CodeMark (Product Certification) are used.
- Blanket insulation such as glass fiber is used, where the cladding is on a cavity (such as brick veneer) and wall underlay is retrofitted to ensure the cavity remains clear and open. Guidance can be found here: www.buildmagazine.org.nz/index.php/articles/show/retrofitting-insulation
- Tightly fitted rigid sheet insulation such as polystyrene is used, where the sheet thickness is at least 20mm less than the wall framing, meaning that a minimum 20mm cavity can be maintained between the cladding and the back of the insulation
- The application shows that standard NZS4246:2016 'Energy Efficiency – Installing bulk thermal insulation in residential buildings' has been chosen as a means of compliance. This standard sets out a method of installing insulation that will comply with the New Zealand Building Code. If using this standard as a means of compliance you will need to tell us, depending on the construction of your building, which section of the standard you are going to use.

This is not a guarantee that an exemption will be granted. All applications will be considered on a case by case basis and depend on the quality of documentation provided.

In summary, a home owner can apply for **either building consent or apply for a discretionary exemption from building consent** to retrofit insulation into exterior walls.

Applying for building consent

Building consent must be granted before insulation work takes place. DCC inspectors will inspect insulation work that is part of a building consent. Where the building consent relates only to the installation of insulation there are no building consent or inspection fees for retrofitting insulation into exterior walls. If carrying out other building work at the same time, please keep the wall insulation in a separate building consent application to ensure no charge is applied. Use the *Minor Residential Internal Alteration* check sheet which can be found here: www.dunedin.govt.nz/building-services-forms

Applying for a discretionary exemption from building consent (Schedule 1, clause 2 of the Building Act 2004)

An exemption must be approved before insulation work takes place. DCC will not inspect the completed building work specified in the exemption application. The exemption process is free of charge. If you are applying for other exemptions at the same time, please do the wall insulation on a separate form to ensure no charge is applied. If a property owner decides to do building work in accordance with a granted exemption it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the work complies with the New Zealand Building Code.

Lodging building consent or discretionary exemption applications

Applications can be lodged using the DCC online portal. You need to be a registered user before you can lodge an application online. More information can be found here: www.dunedin.govt.nz/building-consent-applications

Documentation requirements

For either type of application the following supporting information is required:

- A full floor plan showing which walls are to be insulated.
- Details of any insulation, wall lining or building wrap products to be used.
- A drawn detail or cross section showing how the work will be carried out.

If you require further information, please call Building Services on 03 477 4000 or email building@dcc.govt.nz.