



Buildcheck

Engineering & Building Consultants

Roof Replacement Works

July 2016

Summary

A recent practice note issued by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) in January, 2016 has clarified that a Building Permit is now required when roof replacement works include common upgrades such as an increase in fall or batten replacement.

This means that registered Plumbers may not necessarily be allowed to carry out roof replacements. A registered Builder is required.

Planning should also be considered. If the building height already exceeds planning for roof heights, Building Surveyors can't provide a Building Permit for re-grading roofs without a change to Planning provisions.

Building Permits

One of the biggest misconceptions from builders and roofing contractors alike was that the replacement or installation of roofing battens did not need a building permit.

As the battens are a structural member supporting the roof cladding, they are not exempt under Schedule 8 of the Building Regulations 2006 and this practice note has made specific mention that their installation requires a Building Permit.

Many of the roof replacement projects inspected and managed by Buildcheck require additional fall to ensure the long term performance of the new roof cladding, often the existing roof has failed due to the corrosion caused by ponding water from inadequate fall.

Any projects therefore where the structural roof battens are being replaced or upgrade will require a Building Permit before the works can be undertaken.

Requirements under the Building Regulations require the works to be undertaken by either a Registered Builder, Owner Builder or in the case of works under \$5000 an unregistered builder such as a roofing contractor.

Given the cost of the works under the Building Permit includes the cost of the entire roof replacement, it is unlikely that a roofing contractor can be directly engaged as the builder unless the replacement is relatively small.

The Relevant Building Surveyor chosen for the project will ensure the proposed works comply with the Building Act and as part of this process will check the siting requirements and the need for a planning permit.

Buildcheck has been working to develop a certified structural design that can be adopted to most buildings to expedite the approval of the Building Permit process.

Planning Ramifications

The need to comply with Planning Provisions is as important as the need to acquire a Building Permit for the works and there are various complications associated with roof replacements on buildings generally greater than two storeys in height.

Legislation passed several years ago into the Victorian Planning Scheme introduced prescribed maximum building heights, these heights are an absolute maximum and cannot be exceeded even with by way of a planning permit.

The height restrictions in many areas are less than the existing heights of larger buildings such as residential units greater than two storeys.

The prescribed maximum heights vary depending upon the zoning and schedule requirements adopted by each council.

Roof replacement works therefore requiring an increase in the roof pitch by increasing the height of the battens are in fact prohibited as the works would exceed the maximum building height provision.

Unfortunately the legislation was introduced as a mandatory provision which has no formal mechanism to be varied, hence no avenue for appeal or exemption.

Many dilapidated roofs where the fall of the roof is identified as a major contributing factor to its deterioration cannot therefore be provided with additional fall.

In these instances Buildcheck has developed alternative measures that can be adopted to ensure the existing roof pitch provides adequate drainage and has no negative fall or roof ponding.

Buildcheck can advise Owners Corporations on the maximum height restrictions that apply to their property, assist in the Building and Planning Permit processes, provide scopes of work for tendering and project manage the works from start to finish.

We can be contacted on 03 9563 6246

Or visit us at www.buildcheck.com.au

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