

Questions from webinar 2

Thank you to everyone who attended the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board recent webinar on self-certification on Monday, 18 May 2026. A recording of the webinar is posted on the [Board's YouTube channel](#).

We appreciate the level of engagement and the quality of questions raised during the session. While we were able to answer many of your questions during the webinar, we were not able to get through all of them within the time available. To make sure you have as much information as possible about self-certification, we've answered those outstanding questions below.

You can also access the questions and answers from our [previous webinar in November 2025](#), which provide additional context and detail on how the scheme is expected to operate. Those responses remain relevant and continue to complement the information provided here.

Please note: The responses below reflect the information available at this time. Some aspects of the scheme are still being finalised through legislation, regulations, and Board notices. Further guidance will be provided as these details are confirmed.

Building consent process

Q: Will plumbing and drainlaying work still go through the building consent process? Does self-certification only remove inspections?

A: Yes. Plumbing and drainlaying work will continue to go through the building consent process in the usual way. The building consent remains central to the system. This means:

- the consent must still be applied for;
- the Building Consent Authority (BCA) must still assess compliance with the Building Code; and
- and the consent will specify what work is approved.

The key difference is what happens after the consent is issued. Where work is clearly identified in the consent as self-certifiable, and the work is carried out by an endorsed practitioner, that work will not be inspected by a BCA. Instead, the endorsed practitioner will inspect the work and issue a certificate of compliance confirming it complies with the building consent. In practice, self-certification replaces the inspection step for that work, not the consent process itself. If work is not self-certified, the existing inspection process will continue to apply.

Q: If a practitioner does not apply for endorsement, do they continue working under the current system, including providing any documentation required by the BCA?

A: Yes. If a practitioner does not apply for an endorsement, their work will continue under the existing inspection-based system. This means the BCA will inspect the work as usual, and any documentation or information currently required by the BCA will continue to apply. This includes any records, information, or documentation that supports inspections and the Code Compliance Certificate process.

Self-certification is optional. It does not change existing requirements for those who choose not to participate.

Q: Can a BCA refuse to issue a Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) if a Certificate of Compliance (CoC) has been provided but there are concerns the work does not comply? What is the process to resolve this?

A: A BCA must accept a CoC as evidence that the work is compliant with the building consent for the purposes of issuing a CCC. It is not expected that BCAs will review the content of CoCs other than to check all required documents are present. If the CoC has not been filled out correctly ie supporting material is not attached, then these issues will need to be resolved before a CCC can be issued.

In practice, this is first addressed through the building consent process. This may involve:

- confirming whether the work aligns with the consent;
- clarifying or providing further supporting information;
- identifying and rectifying any non-compliance; and
- where necessary, using the minor variation or amendment processes.

This process sits with the BCA and the consent holder and is managed under the Building Act framework.

However, if the issue relates to the accuracy of the certificate, the way it has been issued, or whether the practitioner has met their certification obligations, that may be considered separately through the Board's audit and disciplinary functions.

In summary, compliance issues are addressed through the building consent and BCA processes, while practitioner conduct and certification issues are addressed through the Board.

Q: Will supporting evidence such as photos be submitted with the CoC, or just retained by the practitioner for audit purposes?

A: Supporting evidence forms part of the certification process and must be submitted with the CoC. This includes photographs, test results, and other relevant documentation that demonstrate the work complies with the building consent.

Practitioners are also required to retain their own records. This is important for meeting their professional obligations and for responding to any audit or follow-up review.

Q: Can a practitioner self-certify work remotely without visiting the site? For example, can you certify work in Christchurch while based in Nelson?

A: No. Self-certification requires the endorsed practitioner to inspect the work in person before certifying it. The key requirement is that the practitioner issuing the certificate must be satisfied, based on their own inspection, that the work complies with the building consent. This means the inspection itself must be carried out in person, and the endorsed practitioner must attend the site and inspect the work before certifying it.

While work carried out under supervision can be certified, this does not remove the requirement for the endorsed practitioner to inspect the work themselves. The responsibility for certification sits with the practitioner whose name is on the certificate.

Certification must not be based solely on remote information such as photos, video, or reports from others. The endorsed practitioner must physically attend the site, inspect the work, and make their own judgement before issuing a certificate of compliance.

Changes during construction

Q: If the approved plans don't work on site, can you rely on as-built drainage plans, or is a consent amendment still required?

A: All work must comply with the building consent as issued. If the installed work differs from the approved plans, the correct pathway depends on the extent of the change:

- minor changes may be treated as minor variations and approved through that process; and
- more significant changes will require a building consent amendment.

As-built plans are an important part of documenting what has been installed and will form part of the supporting evidence for certification. However, they do not replace the need to follow the correct consent process where changes occur. This means if the proposed plans are not workable on site, this should be addressed before the work is certified. The appropriate process must be followed to record or approve the change. Finally, the practitioner can only certify work once it aligns with the building consent, including any approved variations or amendments.

Q: What happens if there is a change to the approved plans during construction, and who is responsible for preparing as-built documentation?

A: Changes during construction must be managed through the existing building consent framework. Where a change is identified, minor changes may be treated as minor variations and must be approved and recorded through that process and more significant changes will require a building consent amendment.

Self-certification does not change these requirements. A practitioner can only certify work that aligns with the building consent, including any approved variations or amendments. If a change is required, it should be addressed before the work is certified, and the appropriate process followed to ensure the consent reflects what has been built.

In terms of as-built documentation, this forms part of the supporting evidence for certification. The endorsed practitioner is responsible for ensuring that appropriate documentation, including as-built information where relevant, is prepared and retained to support the certificate of compliance.

Scope of self-certifiable work

Q: Will we be able to self-certify Watercare or council public drainage work as well for subdivisions?

A: No. The scheme applies to plumbing and drainlaying work that sits within the building consent system and is associated with buildings that meet the eligibility criteria for self-certification.

Public infrastructure and subdivision drainage work, including work for Watercare or council networks, generally sits outside that framework and is not part of the types of work intended to be self-certified. Subdivision and public network drainage work will continue to follow existing approval and inspection processes, rather than being certified by an endorsed practitioner.

Q: If work involves fire penetrations or fire-rated elements that are signed off by other professionals, can the plumbing work still be self-certified?

A: Work involving certain higher-risk areas, such as fire separations and intertenancy elements, is excluded from self-certification. This means that where plumbing or drainlaying work is within a fire-rated element, affects a fire separation or is located between shared tenancy spaces it will not be eligible for self-certification and will need to be inspected through the usual BCA process. The fact that another professional is involved in signing off related work does not change this.

Eligibility for self-certification depends on whether the plumbing or drainlaying work itself falls within the defined scope. If the work interacts with fire separations or similar excluded areas, you should assume it will not be self-certifiable, regardless of who is involved in other parts of the work.

Insurance and liability

Q: Is there any guidance on the level of 'appropriate insurance' that will be required for endorsement?

A: A specific level of insurance has not yet been set. The Board will consult on insurance requirements as part of the overall eligibility settings for endorsement. However, it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure they have insurance that is appropriate for the work they carry out and intend to self-certify.

Practitioners should speak directly with their insurance provider to understand whether their current cover is suitable, or whether any changes may be required. Where a practitioner is employed, they should also confirm with their employer that the business's insurance arrangements appropriately cover self-certification activities.

Q: Do practitioners need professional indemnity insurance as part of applying for endorsement?

A: Practitioners will be required to have appropriate insurance as part of eligibility for endorsement. The Board has not prescribed specific types of insurance at this stage. Any requirements relating to particular types of cover will be considered through consultation on the Board's notices.

The key requirement is that practitioners must have insurance that is appropriate for the work they carry out and the additional responsibility of certifying that work. Practitioners should speak with their insurer to confirm that their insurance arrangements are suitable for self-certification. Where a practitioner is working for a business, they should ensure that the business's insurance also covers them for this activity.

Q: Will homeowners need any additional insurance cover where work is self-certified?

A: No. The scheme does not introduce any requirement for homeowners to obtain additional insurance where work is self-certified. The self-certification scheme has been designed so that existing protections for homeowners continue to apply. This includes the requirement for all work to comply with the Building Code, Building Act warranties that apply to residential building work and other legal protections available to consumers.

The scheme shifts who provides assurance for certain work, from the BCA to the endorsed practitioner. As a result, there is a greater expectation that practitioners take responsibility for both carrying out the work and certifying that it complies. This is why practitioners seeking endorsement will be required to have insurance that is appropriate for the work they undertake and certify.

If issues arise, homeowners continue to have access to existing forms of redress. This includes engaging with the practitioner to address defects or non-compliance, using the building consent process where compliance issues arise, making a complaint to the Board about a practitioner's work or certification practices and pursuing any rights available to them under contract and relevant legislation.

The Board's role is to regulate practitioners and oversee the scheme. It does not insure or indemnify work, but it can investigate concerns about a practitioner's competence or certification practices where required.

Q: If issues arise later but the work has been completed and certified correctly, will the Board support the practitioner?

A: The Board's role is to regulate licensed practitioners and oversee the self-certification scheme. It is not a professional association and does not represent or advocate on behalf of practitioners. The Board does not provide liability cover, legal support, or financial backing for work carried out by practitioners. Practitioners remain responsible for their work and for the certification they issue.

Where issues arise, they are addressed through the existing legal and contractual frameworks. This may involve resolving matters directly with the client, addressing any building consent or compliance issues and relying on the practitioner's own insurance arrangements.

The Board may become involved where there are concerns about a practitioner's competence, conduct, or certification practices. In those cases, the Board's role is to assess whether requirements have been met and to take action if necessary.

Endorsements and Eligibility

Q: Can companies apply for the endorsement?

A: No. Endorsements are granted to individual practitioners and sit against the practitioner's licence. This reflects the fact that certification is a professional judgement made by the individual practitioner. The practitioner whose name is on the certificate is responsible for inspecting the work and confirming that it complies with the building consent.

The Board regulates licensed individuals, not companies. This is what the Act we operate under allows us to regulate; it does not extend to companies. While practitioners may work within a business or company, the endorsement and the responsibilities that come with it sit with the individual. This means a company cannot be endorsed to self-certify work. Individual practitioners within that company must apply for and hold their own endorsement, while businesses can support the process through systems and administration. However, they cannot take on or replace the practitioner's certification responsibility.

Q: Is endorsement granted for a three-year period?

A: Yes. Endorsements are intended to be granted for a period of up to three years. This duration is set through the legislative framework for the scheme. This differs from the current licensing model, where practising licences are renewed annually. Endorsement operates over a longer, fixed period rather than being renewed each year.

An endorsement remains valid only while the practitioner holds a current practising licence in the relevant trade. If a practitioner's licence expires, is suspended, or cancelled, the endorsement will not be valid during that time.

Q: When you refer to training as part of eligibility, is this the same as CPD?

A: No. The training required for endorsement is separate from CPD. This training is part of the eligibility process and is intended to be completed once at the point a practitioner applies for endorsement. It is designed to ensure that practitioners understand the scope of the scheme, their responsibilities when certifying work, and the requirements around documentation and record keeping.

This is different from CPD, which is ongoing and forms part of maintaining a practising licence. In addition to the initial training requirement, there may be further CPD or training expectations for practitioners who hold an endorsement. These would be separate and would apply over time to ensure practitioners continue to meet the standards required for self-certification. Further detail on any ongoing requirements will be confirmed as part of the final scheme settings.

Q: Will there be a cost for the training, and will it need to be repeated or renewed over time?

A: A separate fee for the initial training is not anticipated at this stage. The current approach is that the required training would form part of the endorsement process and its fee, rather than being charged as a separate standalone fee.

The initial training is intended to be completed once as part of obtaining an endorsement. Its purpose is to ensure practitioners understand the requirements of the scheme and their responsibilities when certifying work. Any additional training or learning requirements over time would be separate from this initial training and would form part of CPD. Further detail on training, including any costs and ongoing requirements, will be confirmed through consultation as part of the Board's notices.

Auditing

Q: What happens if an audit finds non-compliant work, and does the practitioner have to fix it?

A: The Board's audit function is an important part of the self-certification scheme and is designed to provide assurance that certification is being carried out correctly and consistently. Audits focus on reviewing CoCs and the supporting documentation, such as photos, test results, and records, to confirm that the certification is accurate and aligns with the building consent. If non-compliant work is identified, the outcome will depend on the nature and seriousness of the issue. This may include providing guidance or support where improvements are needed, seeking further information or clarification or carrying out a more detailed review or investigation in more serious cases.

The Board intends to take a proportionate approach. Not all issues will result in further action, particularly where they are minor or unintentional. However, where there are significant or repeated concerns, further regulatory action may be taken.

The question of rectifying non-compliant work sits separately from the audit process. Rectification is generally addressed through the building consent process, including any requirements set by the BCA, contractual arrangements between the parties involved and the practitioner's own legal and insurance obligations. Audits are about assurance and maintaining confidence in the scheme. How issues are handled depends on the circumstances and rectification is managed through the building and contractual frameworks, not through the audit process itself.

Costs

Q: What is the cost for the endorsement?

A: The cost of endorsement has not yet been set. The Board will consult on the application fee and audit levy before they are finalised. These costs will be based on a cost recovery approach and are intended to reflect the work required to administer and oversee the scheme. This includes things such as assessing endorsement applications, maintaining the certification register and carrying out monitoring and auditing activities.

It is important to note that the establishment of the scheme, including system development, has been funded by the Government. Practitioner fees are intended to cover only the ongoing operation of the scheme. As the scheme is optional, only practitioners who choose to apply for an endorsement will pay these costs. Practitioners will have an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed fees as part of the consultation process.

Q: Will council consent costs come down if self-certification is used, or will costs stay the same or increase for the homeowner?

A: This will depend on the individual BCA. Building consent fees are set by councils, and there is no single national approach to how those costs are structured. While self-certification may reduce the need for routine inspections for certain plumbing and drainlaying work, inspections are only one part of the overall consent process. Any change in cost will depend on the approach taken by the relevant BCA.

Q: Will there be any difference in consent costs depending on whether work is self-certified or inspected by the BCA?

A: This will vary depending on how each council structures its fees. Self-certification changes how certain work is verified, by replacing routine inspections with practitioner certification. However, it does not remove the requirement for the BCA to process and assess the building consent or to administer the code compliance certificate process. Practitioners and homeowners should check with the relevant council if they want to understand how fees may apply in a specific case.

Next Steps

Q: What is the roll out date for this to start?

A: The scheme is expected to go live later in 2026. The exact date will be confirmed once all legislative and regulatory settings are finalised.

Before the scheme can go live, there are a number of steps that still need to be completed. This includes finalising both the legislation on the scheme overall and the regulations that set the scope and operation of the scheme. Then the Board confirming the detailed settings it will establish through notices. The Board intends to consult on those notices, including eligibility criteria, endorsement requirements, fees and levy and other operational settings in the coming months. This consultation will provide practitioners with an opportunity to review and provide feedback before the final requirements are confirmed.

Further guidance and information will also be provided ahead of the scheme going live so practitioners understand what is required and can prepare if they are considering applying for endorsement.

Q: Is the long-term intent for the Board to also manage the gas certification scheme?

A:

Based on the Board's current understanding, there are no proposed changes to the way the gas certification regime operates. In its public submissions, the Board has advocated for responsibility for gas certificates to sit with the Board, as it considers this aligns appropriately with the Board's regulatory role.

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying is a separate scheme introduced through its own legislative and regulatory framework. It does not affect the existing arrangements for gasfitting. If any changes to the gas certification regime were to be considered in the future, those would be progressed separately and communicated through the appropriate legislative and policy processes.