

Building and Plumbing Newsflash

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Consultation on draft regulation amendments for installing roof mounted solar collector systems

Purpose

To advise that a draft amendment regulation has been released for a six-week public consultation period. The proposed regulation aims to simplify the building development approval process for installing roof mounted solar collectors (photovoltaic solar panels and solar hot water systems) by removing the need for a building approval when the installation complies with certain criteria.

Background

The *Building Act 1975* provides for when building work requires a building development approval. Generally, building work will require a building development approval unless it is deemed self-assessable or exempt under the *Building Regulation 2006*.

At present, there is some uncertainty within the industry and community regarding when a building development approval is required for installing roof mounted solar collectors. There are also some concerns about the potential amenity and aesthetic impacts of large systems, particularly in residential areas.

On 1 May 2013, an amendment to Australian Standard 1170.2: *Wind Actions* will take effect under the National Construction Code to include more specific guidance about how to address the structural integrity of roof mounted solar collectors in high winds.

Proposed regulation

The proposed amendments to the Building Regulation will clarify that the installation of a roof mounted solar collector that complies with certain criteria is deemed as self-assessable building work and will therefore not require a building development approval. This will remove the need for unnecessary building development approvals and reduce costs and delays for developers and property owners. Only proposed installations that do not comply with the criteria (see below) will be deemed as assessable work that requires a building development approval. This is because non-compliant roof mounted solar collectors may be subjected to additional wind forces requiring specific engineering design.

It is proposed that the installation of a roof mounted solar collector will only need a building approval if the solar panels are:

- not parallel with the roof surface (i.e. they are built up on an angle that is different to the roof angle)
- more than 300 millimetres above the roof surface
- closer than twice the distance between the underside of the panel and the roof, from any roof edges. For example, if the underside of the panels is 75 millimetres above the roof surface, the ends of the panels cannot be any closer than 150 millimetres to any roof edges.

Roof mounted solar collectors that do not meet the criteria are also more likely to have a negative impact on the amenity or aesthetics of a location. The proposed amendments will therefore allow individual local governments to address these issues as a concurrence agency. A proposed amendment to the *Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009* will provide that a concurrence agency response may be triggered where a roof mounted solar collector requires a building approval and the local government has, by resolution or a planning scheme, declared that the solar collectors may have an adverse effect on the amenity or aesthetics of a locality.

- [Consultation draft of the Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation](#)

How do I provide comment?

Your comments and suggestions will provide the Queensland Government with valuable feedback about community views on the proposal and the suggested options.

The [response questions](#) can be found on the Get Involved website: www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au.

Other ways to comment

Mail your comments to:

Attention: Roof mounted solar collector consultation
Building Codes Queensland
Department of Housing and Public Works
GPO Box 2457 Brisbane Qld 4001 Australia

Deliver your response form in person to:

Department of Housing and Public Works
Building Codes Queensland
Level 7, 41 George Street Brisbane Qld 4000

Closing date for comments

Comments on the discussion paper must be received by no later than **5.00 pm, Monday 3 June 2013**.

Contact for more information

Department of Housing and Public Works
Building Codes Queensland Division
Tel: 1800 534 972
buildingcodes@qld.gov.au

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