

BUILDING PROGRESS VICTORIA

Checking progress

If you are building a new home, renovating or adding an extension, check progress and talk to your builder about any questions or concerns. Before making stage payments, you can engage an independent building consultant to check the construction work meets your contract requirements and to advise you of the standard and progress of the contract work. If there are any issues, they will raise these with you. However, make sure that their involvement does not cause a delay in the work.

Your building surveyor will inspect work to check it meets current building standards. Your builder must give you a copy of each building inspection outcome in writing. You can also ask your building surveyor for a copy of this document.

Make sure you:

- provide the builder with items you agreed to supply on time, so that you do not delay the work. For example, materials such as tiles, or a service such as a mosaic artist to work on flooring
- put the details and costs of any changes to the contract in writing. You and your builder must sign off on the changes before the building contractor starts the work relating to the changes
- make stage payments when the construction work for each stage is complete. Do not make any payments before a stage has been completed.

Visiting your building site

You have the right to 'reasonable access' to your building site at any time during construction. This right applies even if you sign a contract that says otherwise - for example, if the contract limits your visits to business hours only.

What is reasonable will depend on the situation. For example, your builder tells you on Friday that the foundation stage is complete, and the slab will be poured on Monday. If you are using an independent building consultant, ensure that they inspect the work to make sure there are no hidden building defects.

It would be 'reasonable' for you to have access to the building site on the weekend.

You should always consult your builder to discuss occupational health and safety issues before entering the site.

If you interfere with the carrying out of building works, the builder will not be responsible for costs or delays resulting from your actions. The builder must notify you within five business days, in writing, if there are any delays or additional costs.

When building work is complete

Before you take possession of your property, make sure you thoroughly inspect it for any issues, including scratches or marks. List any issues you identify on the handover sheet for discussion with your builder.

This discussion period is often referred to in a contract as the 'defects liability period'. The handover sheet is a way of outlining the condition of the property prior to you taking possession.

Listing any damage or issues may help avoid disputes about who is responsible for fixing any issues - that is, whether the issue was there before or after you took possession.

