

# SEVERE WEATHER FACT SHEET

## REPAIRING OR REBUILDING DWELLING HOUSES

March 2025

### Approvals for repairing, raising, or rebuilding affected houses

This fact sheet provides advice about when a Council approval is required to repair or rebuild a house after a severe weather event, including renovations, plumbing, and pool fences.

Council Planning Information Officers (Town Planners) can provide general planning advice about affected properties. Contact Council on (07) 3403 8888.

#### Will I need Council approval?

This will depend on the extent, type of repairs and renovations proposed and whether your house:

- complies with the acceptable outcomes in the Dwelling house code or Dwelling house (small lot) code if located on a small lot;
- complies with the acceptable outcomes Section A of the Flood overlay code;
- is located within the Heritage overlay, Traditional Building Character (TBC) overlay or Pre-1911 Building overlay; and/or
- is located in a non-residential zone.

Before you begin work, you need to check what approval (if any) is required. Some work will be minor but may require a building approval from a private building certifier, particularly if it is structural in nature. Other buildings may need more major work and some homeowners may be considering additional renovations, such as raising the house to improve flood immunity.

If you need an approval, there are two main types:

1. Planning approvals (known as a Development Application or DA) which are assessed and decided by Brisbane City Council. *Please note: Where DA approval is required, a Building Approval is also required.*

Some examples where a planning approval is required include:

- houses which are over 9.5 metres in height
- houses located in the Heritage, TBC or Pre-1911 Building overlays

2. Building approvals (BA) are assessed and decided by private building certifiers.

Some examples where a building approval is required include:

- houses
- retaining walls, swimming pools and pool fences
- fire safety systems

#### How will I know if my house is in a heritage, TBC or pre-1911 building overlay, on a small lot or in a non-residential zone?

To check if this applies to your house, you can self-serve online and view a property report through Council's online interactive mapping via [www.cityplan.brisbane.qld.gov.au/epln/](http://www.cityplan.brisbane.qld.gov.au/epln/). Alternatively, Phone Council on (07) 3403 8888.

#### My house has been flooded but does not need repairs. Do I need an approval to move back in?

There are no Council approvals required. See the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) fact sheet "[A Home Owner's Guide To Rebuilding After A Flood](#)".

#### What if I'm rebuilding my house to exactly as it was pre-weather event?

If you intend rebuilding or repairing your house 'like-for-like' because your house was damaged by the weather event, you do not need a DA, providing the previous building was lawful. If you want to rebuild it differently (not like-for-like), you will need a BA and you may need a DA.

#### How do I obtain a copy of previously approved plans so I can build 'like-for-like'?

Council does have some building plans for houses, house alterations and extensions approved since 1987. Contact Council on (07) 3403 8888 to check if Council has a copy of your approved building plans. For DAs approved after 1 January 2004, a copy of the approved plans may be available via the online Development.i tool at [developmenti.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://developmenti.brisbane.qld.gov.au).

If you decide to rebuild 'like-for-like' you should be aware that the original house may not have flood immunity to Council's current standards. You may want to consider raising your house to achieve flood immunity.



### How can I make my house more flood resilient?

You could consider raising your house to ensure runoff can freely drain around/under the house and use building products that have higher water resistance ratings. The Queensland Government has produced a [fact sheet](#) regarding water resilient products and building techniques.

### Can I raise the height of my house?

Council will consider applications to raise houses above 9.5 metres measured to the top of the roof to achieve flood immunity. When determining a new height, you must consider Council's current standard for minimum habitable floor level, which is the higher of the:

- Residential Flood Level (RFL) for the Brisbane River plus 500 mm freeboard;
- 1% annual exceedance of probability (AEP) flood level plus 500 mm for creek/waterway flooding; or
- 2% AEP flood level plus 500 mm for overland flow flooding.

Council has flood level information for river and creek/waterway flooding available on your FloodWise Property Report, but there are no flood levels for overland flow. You may also wish to consider the actual flood level recently reached on your site. If the intended height of the house exceeds 9.5m above the natural ground level, then a DA is required.

### How long will it take for my application to be assessed?

Council has a dedicated team to assess development applications, including those for houses affected by the weather event. Assessment times will depend on the complexity and type of application.

### If I need to lodge a DA, how do I do this and what forms do I need to complete?

For information on the application process and forms, visit Council's website [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au) or phone Council on (07) 3403 8888.

### What if I lodged a development application with Council prior to the weather event?

If you have already lodged a development application for a house and you want to change your design to increase

flood immunity, contact Council's Assessment Manager for the application to discuss your options.

### Who do I contact for further information regarding development applications?

Please refer to the Planning Approvals table below which provides a guide for the type of approvals you may require and who to contact. If your building works are not covered below or you have further questions, phone Council on (07) 3403 8888.

### If I need a building approval, how do I contact a private building certifier?

To contact a building certifier, you may search online at [Queensland Building and Construction Commission](#). Contact the Queensland Building and Construction Commission on 139 333 to check if your building certifier has the correct licenses.

### Where can I find more information about building and building in Brisbane?

For general information about planning and building in Brisbane, visit [Brisbane City Council Planning and Building](#) website.

### Who can do plumbing work at my property?

Only a Queensland licenced plumber can carry out plumbing work at your property.

### When should a plumbing application be lodged with Council?

Please consult your licenced plumbing contractor. The contractors are the best person to decide on the right plumbing compliance option for the works required at your property, whether it is permit work, notifiable work or minor work.

If you require assistance or advice regarding lodging a plumbing application with Council, please contact Council's Contact Centre on (07) 3403 8888 and ask to speak with a Plumbing Para-technical Officer from Plumbing Services assessment team.

The following tables are attached as a guide to types of approvals you may require.

## PLANNING APPROVALS

Building approval may be required outside of what is listed below. Contact a private building certifier.

Activity	Permit required If yes, type of permit	Requirements	Comments
<b>DEMOLITION</b>			
Demolition or partial demolition of a pre-1947 building within the TBC overlay.	Yes DA		Contact Council to discuss your particular situation.
Demolition or partial demolition of a pre-1911 building within the TBC or pre-1911 Building overlay.	Yes DA		Contact Council to discuss your particular situation.
Demolition or partial demolition of a Heritage listed building (including removal or replacement of any part of the building)	Yes DA	Unless an exemption certificate has been issued for the work under section 74 of the <i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>	Contact Council to discuss your particular situation.
<i>Please note:</i> A plumbing application is required to seal off existing sewerage and water supply connections prior to house or building removal from property.			
<b>REBUILDING TO EXISTING</b>			
Rebuild in whole or part to lawful pre-flood condition.	May require DA in some circumstances	If all or part of the house is destroyed (not just damaged) by flooding, then it can be rebuilt as it was without a DA. A BA will be required.	Contact Council.
<b>REBUILDING DIFFERENTLY</b>			
Rebuild with new design, changed location, alternate materials, altered height or addition.	May require DA		Contact Council to discuss your particular situation.
Raising an existing house higher.	May require DA in some circumstances		Contact Council.
<b>REPAIRS - INTERNAL</b>			
Internal repairs, e.g. wall and ceiling linings, cabinetry, floors, carpets.	No		See QBCC fact sheet <a href="#">"A Home Owner's Guide To Rebuilding After a Flood"</a> .
<b>REPAIRS - EXTERNAL</b>			
External repairs with same materials, e.g. windows.	No		See QBCC fact sheet <a href="#">"A Home Owner's Guide To Rebuilding After a Flood"</a> .
External repairs with different materials and fittings, e.g. windows.	May require DA in some circumstances		Contact Council. If the house is not located within the TBC or pre-1911 Building overlay, then a DA is not required.

## BUILDING OPTIONS AND APPROVALS

(Source: Queensland Building and Construction Commission) For work not requiring a planning approval.

Activity	Permit required If yes, type of permit	Requirements	Comments
<b>BUILDING – DEMOLITION</b>			
Building to be totally demolished and rebuilt 'like-for-like'.	Yes BA	Demolition and building work must comply with current standards and any other Council approvals such development approvals and build-over-sewer approvals.	A pre-1947 house in the TBC overlay or a pre-1911 within the TBC or pre-1911 Building overlay will require a DA. Refer to above table.
<i>Please note:</i> A plumbing application is required to seal off existing sewerage and water supply connections prior to house or building removal from property.			
<b>BUILDING – INTERNAL</b>			
Part or total like for like replacement of internal linings (no structural damage).	No	Internal linings must be fitted to current manufacturers requirements.	Not considered structural work and therefore does not need an approval. However, you may need approval if the internal lining is contributing to the structural bracing and tie down or if the lining is impacting on wet areas such as laundry and toilet.
Minor repairs to structural elements, e.g. framing less than 20% of elements.	No	Repairs must comply with existing standards.	If less than 20% of structural framing members needs repairing, the work can be considered minor. Contact your builder or certifier who can calculate this and recommend which building standards the repairs should comply with.
Minor repairs to non-structural internal walls.	No	Repairs must comply with existing building standards or published tie-down guidelines.	If less than 20% of structural framing members needs repairing, the work can be considered minor. Contact your builder or certifier who can calculate this and recommend which building standards the repairs should comply with.
Substantial repairs to structural and non-structural framing members (more than 20% to structural and non-structural framing members).	Yes BA	Repairs must comply with current standards or to building certifier's conditions.	Apply current standards where possible. Seek advice from your builder, building certifier or even an engineer if the repair work is extensive.
Repairs to fire rated walls and ceilings.	Yes BA	Refer to building certifier.	All work must comply with current standards.
<b>BUILDING – EXTERNAL</b>			
Minor like-for-like repairs to non-structural external cladding.	No	Repairs must comply with existing building standards.	

Retaining walls (rebuild).	May require a BA in some circumstances	Refer to building certifier. Engineering design may be required.	Building approval will be required if: • over one metre in height or less than one metre in height and supporting a surcharge loading, e.g. other structures near the wall that may affect the stability of the soil.
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### Retaining walls, pools and pool fences

Activity	Permit required If yes, type of permit	Requirements	Comments
Retaining walls (repair).	No, if no loss of structural integrity	Refer to building certifier.	Wall can be rebuilt to standards from when wall was originally constructed. Seek advice from your building certifier or registered structural engineer.
Substantial repairs to damaged pool fencing.	Yes BA	Pool fencing must comply with current standards.	If substantial repair work is required, the Building Act 1975 requires it to be replaced with a new one that complies with current standards.
Minor repairs to damaged pool fencing.	No	All repairs must comply with current safety standards.	Formal approval is not required if: a) the part of the pool fencing being repaired or replaced is no longer than a total of 2.4 metres and includes no more than two posts, or b) if a pool safety inspector issues a pool safety certificate for the minor repairs and the part repaired is no longer than five metres and includes no more than six posts.

### Plumbing

Activity	Licenced Plumber required	Plumbing Compliance Option		
		Permit work – Plumbing permit to be obtained from Council prior to starting work.	Notifiable work – Licenced plumbing contractor advises Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) after work is completed or invoice issued.	Minor work – Licenced plumbing contractor can undertake this work – does not need to advise QBCC or the Local Council.
Replacing or removing an existing basin, toilet, bath, shower, kitchen sink, laundry tub.	Yes	No	No	Yes

Replacing a hot water unit (this work may also involve other licenced trades, e.g. electrical, gas).	Yes	No	Yes	No
Clearing a blocked sanitary drain	Yes	No	No	Yes
Replacing a pump.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Repairing a broken or damaged pipe.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Relocating or adding additional, basin/s, toilet/s, bath/s, shower/s, kitchen sink/s, laundry tub/s within your existing house – <i>Sanitary drain not connected to a combined sanitary drain.</i>	Yes	No	Yes	No
Relocating or adding additional, basin/s, toilet/s, bath/s, shower/s, kitchen sink/s, laundry tub/s within your existing house – <i>Sanitary drain connected to a combined sanitary drain.</i>	Yes	Yes	No	No
Repairing or replacing a plumbing fitting.	Yes	No	No	Yes
Repairing or replacing a fire hydrant or fire hose reel.	Yes	No	No	Yes

## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

### Brisbane City Council

[www.brisbane.qld.gov.au](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au)

- Fact sheets and guides
- Council can answer simple questions about your development intentions for recovery from the recent weather event. Contact Council on 3403 8888
- Emergency dashboard

### Brisbane Sustainability Agency

<https://www.sustainablebrisbane.com.au/flood-resilience/>

- How to improve flood resilience for homeowners

### Master Builders Queensland

<https://www.mbqlld.com.au/> or 1300 30 50 10

### QBCC (Queensland Building and Construction Commission)

[www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/home-maintenance/rebuilding-after-natural-disaster](http://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/home-maintenance/rebuilding-after-natural-disaster)

- Recovery from natural disasters in Queensland
- Guide to assessment and repair of flood damaged timber and timber-framed houses

### Queensland Reconstruction Authority

[www.qra.qld.gov.au/resilient-homes/flood-resilient-building-guidance-queensland-homes](http://www.qra.qld.gov.au/resilient-homes/flood-resilient-building-guidance-queensland-homes)

- Flood Resilient Building Guidance for Queensland Homes - Fact sheet

### Queensland Health

[www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/environment-land-water/asbestos](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/environment-land-water/asbestos)

- Asbestos information booklet