BUILDING WARRANT OF FITNESS

If you own, or are looking to purchase a commercial or multi residential building, (or a single household residence accessed by a cable car), it could contain what are known as “specified systems”. Under the Building Act 2004, the owner of a building with specified systems (such as sprinklers, lifts, fire alarms) must have them listed on a compliance schedule, and needs to provide Council with an annual Building Warrant of Fitness, and supporting documents, to confirm that the building's specified systems are being maintained and are operating effectively.

HAVE YOU GOT YOUR BUILDING WARRANT OF FITNESS (BWOF)?

A current BWOF should be displayed in a public space showing that the specified systems in the building have been maintained in accordance with the building’s Compliance Schedule.

There are 16 types of systems, some of them very specialised, but all of them designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who enter or work in your building.

COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE

The Compliance Schedule is a document issued by a council for buildings that contain specified systems. The Compliance Schedule states the specified systems, their performance standards and includes the inspection, maintenance and reporting procedures needed to keep them in good working order.

Some specified systems can be maintained and inspected by the building owner while others need this work to be undertaken by Independently Qualified Persons (IQPs).

BUILDING WARRANT OF FITNESS

The BWoF is a written statement issued annually to Council, a copy of which is also publicly displayed in the building. The BWoF is a declaration by the building owner, or the building owner's agent, that all the specified systems in the building have been inspected, maintained and reported on in accordance with the compliance schedule for a period of 12 months prior to the issue date.

More precisely, it means you, the owner, declare you have maintained (or you have employed qualified people to maintain) the systems to the required relevant performance standards during the previous 12 month period.

COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE: FORM 12A

This form is issued by the IQP’s as verification that the inspection and maintenance procedures under the compliance schedule have been carried out. These forms need to accompany the Form 12 (BWoF) when sent through to Council each year for registering.

WHAT IS AN IQP AND HOW DOES ONE FIND THEM?

An Independent Qualified Person (or a BWoF service provider), approved by a council as qualified to inspect, maintain and report on specified systems.

The following portal has a list of all the registered IQP’s and the disciplines they are registered for: IQP Register search.

ARE THERE ANY FEES?

Council charges an annual fee which is sent out each year with the BWoF Renewal Reminder letter. This is charged for the administration associated with your BWoF.

SPECIFIED SYSTEMS

Specified systems are systems or features that contribute to the proper functioning of a building. Specified systems require ongoing inspection and maintenance to ensure they function as required, because if they fail to operate properly, they have the potential to adversely affect health or life safety.

The specified systems, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations 2005, are:

SS1	Automatic systems for fire suppression
SS2	Automatic or manual emergency warning systems for fire or other dangers
SS3/1	Automatic sliding doors
SS3/2	Controlled access doors
SS3/3	Electromagnetic or automatic fire doors or fire windows
SS4	Emergency lighting systems
SS5	Escape route pressurisation systems
SS6	Riser mains for use by fire services
SS7	Automatic back-flow preventers connected to a potable water supply
SS8/1	Passenger carrying lifts
SS8/2	Service lifts
SS8/3	Escalators, travelators, or other similar systems for moving people or goods within buildings
SS9	Mechanical ventilation or air-conditioning systems eg, dust extraction, cooling towers, toilet/kitchen/laundry extraction, HVAC, and gas boilers.
SS10	Building maintenance units providing access to exterior and interior walls of buildings
SS11	Laboratory fume cupboards
SS12	Audio loops or other assistive listening systems
SS13	Smoke control systems
SS14/1	Emergency power systems
SS14/2	Signs relating to a system or feature specified for any of the above systems (SS1-13)
SS15/1	Systems for communicating spoken information intended to help evacuation
SS15/2	Final exits
SS15/3	Fire separations
SS15/4	Exit signage for evacuation
SS15/5	Smoke separations
SS16	Cable cars

YOUR OBLIGATIONS AS A BUILDING OWNER IN RELATION TO A BWOF

Every 12 months you must make a fresh declaration and send a copy of the new BWoF along with the Form(s) 12A from the IQPs to Council to register.

The Form 12A, along with other associated BWoF documentation, must be:

- retained for two years;
- kept within a BWoF folder; and
- kept onsite (unless agreed with Council for an alternative location).

A copy of the BWoF must be displayed on site in a public area at all times, as by law this document must be visible to anybody entering your building.

If in doubt about any aspect of your responsibilities regarding the BWoF, please contact us on 04 570 6948 or at bwof@huttcity.govt.nz

REFERENCE

Department of Building and Housing. (2010), *Owners' responsibilities to ensure their buildings are safe to use*. Retrieved from:

building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/bwof-guidance/bwof-guidance.pdf