



Building and Renovating in the NT

Fact Sheet - Consumer Guide

Building or renovating your home can be a rewarding experience, but the process can be complex. The **Building and Renovating in the NT - Consumer Guide** has been developed to help you get started.

The Consumer Guide outlines the choices and processes that you need to know about when building or renovating a stand-alone home, or detached single dwelling. Information on minor building work such as adding carports, sheds and shade structures is also covered.

Whether you are building a new home or extending or renovating your home, there are a range of options you will need to explore and steps that need to be taken. The Consumer Guide will help you navigate your project, understanding the roles and responsibilities of building practitioners and your rights and responsibilities.

With apartments and units being an increasingly popular housing choice, the Consumer Guide also contains specific information about buying or renovating apartments or units.

The Consumer Guide can be accessed here: <https://nt.gov.au/property/building/build-or-renovate-your-home/building-and-renovating-a-home>

The following checklists have also been prepared for you to help you prepare for your build project and guide you before you sign a contract for the project.

Checklist - Design and building in the NT

Before you start

- Know your budget and plan your finances.
- Consider what you need now and in the future.
- Know your site – zoning, setbacks, easements, covenants and constraints.
- Find out if you need [planning approval](#).
- Pick the building option that works best for you.

Building basics

- Research the [building process, licences and certification](#).
- Understand the [permits and process](#) for residential building works.
- Understand [quotes and estimates](#).
- Understand [contracts](#).
- Get legal advice before signing any contracts.
- Understand [warranties and insurance](#).
- Organise insurances.
- Engage a [building certifier](#) (unless your building work is exempt from requiring building approval).
- Choose a [builder or contractor](#).
- Research potential builders and check the [disciplinary register](#).

Approvals

- Your finances need to be approved.
- Check if you need to submit a [development application](#), if so lodge.
- Check if you have development covenants and get the required approvals.
- The contract must be signed by you and the builder.

- Get your [building permit](#).
- Have a pre-start meeting your builder.

During Construction

- Communicate regularly with your builder or contractor.
- Get any changes in writing and understand how the changes impact on the cost, timeframe, building permit and insurances.
- Understand the inspection points in your build and the progress payments.
- Arrange to take photographs of the work at regular intervals, particularly any part of the work that may be of concern to you.
- Understand how to [resolve disputes](#) during the build, remember to check the process in your contract.

Completion and handover

- Builder must sign a builders declaration.
- Arrange a pre-handover inspection before the final handover.
- Check the works for defects or missing items.
- Understand the process of making good on any defects.
- Apply for [occupancy certification](#).
- Move in only after the occupancy certificate is issued.

After you build or renovate

- Keep all relevant records.
- Regularly check termite protection systems.
- Check internal and external elements for damage.
- Maintain, clean and repair your home.

Checklist - Before signing a contract

- Make sure you understand the conditions of the contract.
- Get legal advice.
- Check the contract include all of the following which are required in the Building Regulations:
 - the building work to be carried out on a single project
 - the building contractor's details and registration number
 - the extent and the value of the work and the contracted price
 - the applicable building standard of work, if higher than the National Construction Code
 - the schedule of progress payments
 - a provision about dispute resolution
 - the consumer guarantees required by the *Building Act 1993*.

Make sure you understand the following from your contract:

- the term 'lock up stage'
- the start and finish dates for the contract will be
- the impact of any lengthy delays
- any compensation for any costs/losses if the work isn't completed on time
- the impact of you making a late progress payment
- your rights to visit the building site for the purpose of inspecting and viewing the works
- that any special requirements and finishes, are they clearly written in the contract
- the standard of work that will occur
- if you or the builder are able to make any changes/variations under the contract once the project has started
- how such variations will managed and recorded
- if you need to include provisions in your contract that are required by your lending institution such as stages for progress payments, inspections of the work and turn around for payments
- is clear about who is supplying what – for instance, are you responsible for purchasing and supplying appliances or fittings such as tapware. Make sure you understand how 'prime cost' items and 'provisional' items are dealt with under the contract.
- how to bring disputes to each other's attention and how to resolve disputes. If you don't follow the method set down in your contract you may jeopardise your position and inadvertently breach your contract.