



Home Improvements Standards

I want to make changes to my home... what are the Department's Home Improvement Standards?

The Department's Home Improvement Standards are similar to the Department's Construction Standards for new housing.

Before applying to your local council to undertake any major improvement, you must first talk to your client service officer and apply for 'in-principle' approval.

After the council approves the plans, you need to supply a copy to your client service officer. If the plans are suitable, your client service officer will send you a final approval letter.

When you tell us the work is complete, the Department will inspect the improvements to ensure that it meets Australian Standards.

The Improvement Standards must be given to tradespeople and builders carrying out the improvements, and their work must comply with these Standards.

The Department can refuse to accept any improvement work that does not meet the Standards and can request that you remove, at your expense, any unauthorised work that has been carried out.

What happens if I move out?

The Department will usually ask you to remove the improvement when you move out.

If the Department agrees that the improvement can be left at the property, it will reimburse you for it at the current (depreciated) value.

If the Department does not agree for the improvement to be left, it will charge you

for costs incurred in removing it and restoring those areas affected by the improvement.

If the Department has asked you to move, you will not be reimbursed for improvements if you are being relocated to a property with similar improvements or amenity. If we establish your entitlement for reimbursement, we will usually only reimburse you for improvements that have been approved in writing. The amount you are reimbursed will be the depreciated value and not the replacement cost.

Where do I get a copy of the Home Improvement Standards?

The Home Improvement Standards are set out below.

Copies of this fact sheet are also available at www.housing.nsw.gov.au

Improvement standards:

1. Kitchen cupboards

You must use licensed electricians and plumbers for any electrical and plumbing work. Ensure you record their licence numbers.

Use only high moisture resistant (HMR) materials in cupboard construction.

Standards for kitchen cupboards:

Benchtops:

- Minimum 32 mm thick HMR particleboard, laminated with high-pressure decorative laminate for high resistance to surface wear, impact and scratching.

Doors and drawer fronts:

- Minimum 16 mm thick HMR particleboard or HMR medium-density

It is illegal for an officer of the Department to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of the Department in exchange for helping you.

If you have any information regarding this, please contact the **Department of Housing's Business Assurance Unit on 1800 806 206**. The Department may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.



Home Improvements Standards

fibreboard (MDF), laminated with high-pressure decorative laminate having medium resistance to surface wear, impact and scratching.

- Provide a 2 mm PVC plastic edge strip to all doors and drawers.

Drawers:

- 13 mm thick (bottom 16 mm), of either HMR particleboard or medium-density HMR fibreboard (MDF), finished with white melamine.
- Completely integrated drawer slide system, comprising a high-quality epoxy coated white steel self-closing feature runner 30-kg load capacity.

Carcass:

- Minimum 16 mm thick HMR particleboard with white melamine finish to all internal surfaces, including edge of frame, carcass, backboard and shelves.

Kickboard:

- Minimum 16 mm thick HMR particleboard, with 2 mm black vinyl or high-pressure high-resistance laminate finish, including any edges.

Cupboard doors:

- Use concealed side wall-mounted hinges with 170° swing.

Kitchen assemblies:

- Must carry a compliance label to current Australian Standards.

2. Bathroom improvements

Due to the potential for leaks, work that could damage the waterproofing of the bathroom is NOT ALLOWED, such as retiling the floor or walls, relocating the bath or toilet, or installing a new shower.

The following fittings, however, can be installed:

- new washbasins
- wall cupboards
- towel rails, grab rails
- toilet roll holders
- shower screens.

3. New fixed appliances (air-conditioning units, built-in heaters)

You must have council approval before installing an air-conditioning unit.

Air-conditioning units and built-in heaters must be installed by licensed tradespeople to meet the equipment manufacturer's instructions.

4. New carpet

Carpets are not to be glued to the floor (NO direct-stick).

Information for carpet suppliers or laying contractors:

Carpet type:

- 100% bulked continuous filament (bcf), solution dyed nylon.
- Loop pile tufted carpet.
- Level pile surface or with slight modulation.
- One-tenth or one-eighth inch gauge.
- 678 g/m² (20 oz/yd²) total pile mass.
- 5 mm maximum pile height.
- "Actionbac", woven polypropylene secondary backing.
- Fire rating to BCA.
- ACCS rating for Residential Extra Heavy Duty (Stairs).
- ACCS registration number on back to a minimum of four times across the width at one-metre lengths.

Interpreter Services

If you have difficulty understanding English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450. TIS will telephone the Department of Housing for you at no cost.

If you are hearing impaired, please contact the TTY Service on 1800 623 310.

Arabic
خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية المجانية
اتصل على الرقم 131 450

Chinese
免費的翻譯傳譯服務
致電 131 450

Russian
Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода
Позвоните по номеру 131 450

Spanish
Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación
Llame al 131 450

Vietnamese
Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí
Điện thoại 131 450

Home Improvements Standards

- Colour as approved by the Department of Housing.

5. Floor and wall tiles

Floor and wall tiles standards:

Ceramic floor tiles:

- Slip resistance (wet and dry) semi-glaze finish.
- Maximum 200 x 200 mm tile.
- Minimum 7 mm thick.

Ceramic wall tiles:

- Minimum 5.5 mm thick.
- White porcelain biscuit and full glaze over face (unglazed edges to body tiles and glazed edges for edge tiles).

6. Security grilles

Security grilles should suit the building and locality in which you live. They must have keyless quick release type locking to open the grille in an emergency.

7. Security shutters

Shutters should suit the building and locality in which you live.

They must have keyless quick release type locking to open the shutter in an emergency.

Install manual shutter controls ONLY (electrically-operated systems fail in a fire).

8. Pergolas and gazebos

The proposed pergola/gazebo must have Department and local council approval before work starts, and can only be built on land controlled by you.

The proposed structure should match the existing dwelling in materials and look, be structurally-sound, freestanding and NOT be attached to any other structure

9. Paving

All paving must be laid with falls to allow any water to run away from the dwelling.

Paving levels should NEVER be formed higher than the adjoining dwelling's damp proof course (DPC) and brick weep-holes.

10. Rainwater tanks

Rainwater tanks must be installed by a licensed plumber and comply with any council or water authority requirements.

Rainwater tanks must not be connected to the internal plumbing of the property.

11. Fences and other improvements

Liaise with your local Department of Housing office before erecting any fence or carrying out any other improvements.

More information

For more information you can:

- visit your local office, Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 4.30pm (closed public holidays and 8.30am - 1pm on Wednesdays). Office hours may vary in some locations
- phone the Department on **Freecall 1800 629 212**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- phone the Aboriginal Enquiry Line on Freecall 1800 355 740, Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (excluding public holidays)
- go to the Department's website www.housing.nsw.gov.au