



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING SERVICES

Ref: MAT 12-18
Current at: May 2013

PRODUCT CONFORMANCE & THE BCA: PART 3 - PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF SUITABILITY

Manufacturers and suppliers have an obligation to understand when the products they supply to the residential building industry need to meet the requirements of the BCA.

The aim of this information sheet is to provide guidance to manufacturers and suppliers by building on the information gathering and pathway options set out in Parts 1 and 2 of this series. It outlines:

- methods that can be used for a material/system/component to demonstrate the evidence of suitability for conformance to the BCA, and
- the need to develop appropriate information to verify that a building product meets the requirements of the BCA.

Parts 1 and 2 of this series outline how to determine when a product needs to meet the requirements of the BCA, how to identify what those requirements are and what options are available to assess a product against those requirements.

This series of information sheet is accompanied by a decision tree (Attachment A) to assist manufacturers and suppliers to systematically work through the process of determining when and how a product can demonstrate conformance with the BCA.

Step 5 – Develop information about how the product meets the necessary performance requirements of the BCA

The final steps in the process relate to the type of evidence that can be developed to demonstrate suitability of a material, system or components. This information will be developed based on the testing, assessment and verification process undertaken in Step 4.

This evidence can then be provided to designers, builders, building owners and building certifiers. For existing products your current technical information is likely to support your claims and supplement the evidence gained from your evaluation process.

The BCA provide specific direction on what 'evidence of suitability' can include. Part 1.2 Volume 2 of and Part A2 Volume 1 of BCA outlines the five methods used to demonstrate suitability for both Deemed to Satisfy (DTS) and Alternative Solution approaches. These are:

- (i) *A report issued by the Registered Testing Authority, showing that the material or form of construction has been submitted to the tests listed in the report, and setting out the results of those tests and any other relevant information that demonstrates its suitability for use in the building.*

This method can be referred to as an appraisal, which can examine all aspects of a product, including manufacture, supply and installation. The output of an appraisal is a 'technical opinion'. Appraisals require ongoing revalidation.

Manufacturers and suppliers can refer to the National Association of Testing Authorities website at www.nata.com.au to find a testing facility for your product.

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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(ii) *A current 'Certificate of Conformity' or a current 'Certificate of Accreditation'*

This method is often delivered through an industry scheme and is commonly used for a product-family e.g. ready-mix concrete or glass, or can be sector based e.g. WERS for windows and ACRS for steel reinforcing. Products are assessed by a recognised organisation against specified industry requirements and can include a self-audit process.

Manufacturers and suppliers can discuss this option with the relevant industry body to determine whether an industry certification scheme for your product or system exists.

(iii) *A certificate from a professional engineer or other appropriately qualified person which*
A) *certifies that a material, design or form of construction complies with the requirements of the Housing Provisions (Vol 2) and of the BCA (Vol 1);*
B) *sets out the basis on which it is given and the extent to which relevant specifications, rules, codes of practice or other publications have been relied upon.*

This assessment method provides verification, endorsement and manufacturer information for a product by independent and competent product assessors e.g. engineers and recognised testing laboratories.

Manufacturers or supplies can engage a suitability qualified professional expert in the product area to prepare documentary evidence, an expert opinion or testing analysis as appropriate.

(iv) *A current certificate issued by a product certification body that has been accredited by the Joint Scheme of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).*

This scheme certifies that a product is compliant with one or more specific clauses of the BCA. A current Product Certificate issued by an accredited certification body must be accepted as evidence of compliance with the BCA, where used according to any conditions and limitations on the Product Certificate.

There are currently three **certification bodies operating in Australia:**

SAI Global Certification	www.saiglobal.com
Global-Mark	www.global-mark.com.au
CertMark Australasia	www.certmark.com.au

(vi) *Any other form of documentary evidence that correctly describes the properties and performance of the material (Vol 1 and 2) or form of construction and adequately demonstrates its suitability for use in the building (Vol 2).*

This type of evidence could refer to product technical information and sometimes test results supplied directly by the manufacturer or supplier. It can outline the quality assurance systems, product specifications, scope of use, and installation requirements for a product. It should enable designers and builders to correctly specify and install the product. It can also cover maintenance requirements, which is important information for building owners.

Step 6 - Provide evidence of conformance

Through the verification process (Steps 4 & 5), a range of documentation will be developed – whether from testing or from industry experts providing opinion and commentary on who the product meets the BCA performance requirements.

Manufacturers and suppliers need to establish what level of information needs to then be publicly available about their product to allow builders and building certifiers to have confidence in the product's use. Not every piece of the verification puzzle needs to be provided publicly but it is important that sufficient information is available to support your product claims.

The information you make available should include:

- **Evidence to support that a calculation method complies with an Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) protocol and can be presented as:**
 - i. A certificate from a professional engineer or other appropriately qualified person which-
 - a. Certifies that the calculation method complies with a relevant ABCB protocol; and
 - b. Sets out the basis on which it is given and the extent to which relevant specifications, rules, codes of practice and other publications have been relied upon.
 - ii. Any other form of document evidence that correctly describes how the calculation method complies with a relevant ABCB protocol.
- **Copies of documentary evidence must be complete copies of the original report or document.**

Whether your product is a DTS or an alternative solution you will need to have this information readily available to designers, builders, building owners and building certifiers.

For an alternative solution you will also need to include details of the criteria you used and how your material/system/component met the criteria.

Remember, evidence of conformance is generally around:

- **Product performance** – does the performance of my product comply with the performance requirements for that product type e.g., a cladding that is water tight?
- **Manufacturing controls** – how can users be assured that every product made is to the same specification and quality?
- **Limitations** - where, when and how can the product be used so it is fit for purpose, and are these limitations clearly stated for designers, installers and builders?
- **Maintenance** – what are the requirements and their impact on ongoing performance, particularly durability?

Conclusion

This series of information sheets is intended to guide you through the process outlined in the BCA for:

- determining when and how a product needs to conform to the BCA;
- providing guidance on how to verify that a product needs to conform to the BCA: and
- establishing the type of evidence that is considered suitable to demonstrate conformance to the BCA.

For more information on technical documentation that you can provide about your product or system please refer to HIA's information sheet "*Guidance for Technical Information and Product Technical Statements*"

**HIA members can contact HIA's Building Services team for more information on
1300 650 620 or hia_technical@hia.com.au.**