

What you are required to do under the Building Act 2004 and 'What we recommend' you do to create a healthy living space

This guide has been written using the recommendations of the Determination 2009/21 issued by the Department of Building and Housing regarding 'Whether proposed building work for conversion of a garage to a sleep-out complies with the Building Code to the extent required by the Building Act'.

The above determination confirms that an existing garage used in conjunction with a residential dwelling has the same classification as the dwelling and therefore is not a 'Change of Use'.

What does this mean:

This means that the only upgrading required under the Building Act 2004 is 'Means of Escape from Fire' which requires a hinged exit door, an exit route of no more than 24m and a smoke alarm in sleeping areas.

In plain English – the average 6m x 6m garage with a hinged personal access (PA) door only needs a smoke alarm fitted to comply as a sleepout (and you don't require a Building Consent to fit a smoke alarm in a dwelling).

So that's what you must do, but what do you need to do to convert your garage into a warm comfortable (and healthy) living space?

The Wanganui District Council recommends:

- Check your property plan packet here at council – this may have useful information on the garages original construction;
- If there is no damp proof membrane a specialized coating should be applied to the floor to prevent dampness;
- Before lining the sleepout now is a good time to insulate the ceiling, the simple method of compliance is R3.2 to the ceiling (but watch the air gap clearance as this stuff is very thick) and R2.2 to the walls. Unfortunately installing insulation in external walls is not exempt work and will require

a building consent (as council is required to inspect the building paper and insulation for compliance);

- Converting existing fixed windows to opening within the same dimensions can be done without a consent but installing new windows may need a consent so come and talk to us (also, now might be a good time to consider double glazing);
- Garages are often built lower to the ground (floor level around 100mm above ground) therefore to prevent dampness the ground level should be lowered to 150mm (to paving), 225mm (to bare ground) or a strip drain fitted (especially at the garage door);
- Remember that if you want to install any plumbing you will need a building consent and additional kitchen facilities will require the payment of a development contribution so again come and talk to us as we are happy to help.

With these items done you'll be able to rest easy knowing that anyone sleeping in your new sleepout is doing so in a safe and healthy environment.

Garage to Sleepout Conversion

So to recap:

- You must install a smoke alarm;
- Many of the recommended upgrades can be done without a building consent;
- Installing external wall insulation requires a building consent;
- All new plumbing and drainage work requires a building consent;
- And an additional kitchen will require a development contribution payment.



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