

Media Release

For immediate release

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Don't move in without an occupancy permit

The Victorian Building Authority warns home and apartment owners they cannot move into a new home or apartment without an occupancy permit.

Victorian building regulations require an occupancy permit for all new homes, units and apartments.

VBA Chief Executive Officer Prue Digby said that an occupancy permit is important as it says that your home or residence is safe to enter.

“Some people believe when they receive an occupancy permit their home or apartment is finished and ready to move into or to be rented when, in fact, it may not be,” she said.

She explained that an occupancy permit is issued when your new home or apartment is ‘suitable to occupy’ from a safety point-of-view.

“This means every item that can affect safety of your new residence is in place, such as the water, gas supply, electrical wiring for the smoke alarms, handrails and balustrades.”

But having an occupancy permit doesn't mean all the painting is done, the carpet is laid or all the interior fittings are installed. All of that may not be finished yet.

Ms Digby explained that with high rise residential apartment living now popular in Melbourne that Victorians should be aware, in addition to the apartment being suitable to occupy, having an occupancy permit says the common areas are safe.

An occupancy permit can only be issued by the building surveyor involved with your building or renovation work.

The VBA says if you buy an apartment off the plan it may not be possible to occupy, even if the permit has been issued. This is normally due to contractual arrangements on settlement.

Accordingly, the VBA recommends home and apartment owners check their building permit, which will state whether the work requires an occupancy permit or a certificate of final inspection before they move in. The building surveyor responsible for your job can help or you can seek legal advice.

For more information, visit www.vba.vic.gov.au

| | OCCUPANCY PERMIT | CERTIFICATE OF FINAL INSPECTION |
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| What is it issued for? | New homes and buildings | Extensions or alterations to existing homes, as well as sheds and garages |
| What does it mean? | Your home is suitable to occupy from a safety point-of-view | A final inspection of the building work has been carried out |
| Who issues it? | Your building surveyor | Your building surveyor |
| When is it issued? | When the building is safe to occupy. When items affecting the safety of your home, such as water, gas supply, electrical wiring for the smoke alarms, and handrails are in place | Once all the building work is completed |
| How do I know if I need it? | Your building permit will state whether you need an occupancy permit | Your building permit will state whether you need a certificate of final inspection |
| Where can I go for more information? | www.vba.vic.gov.au or talk to your building surveyor | www.vba.vic.gov.au or talk to your building surveyor |

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