

What Impact Will the Recent H1 Calculation Changes Have on New Zealand Homes?

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Introduction to H1 Efficiency for New Zealand Homes:

MBIE's updated H1 6th edition formally comes into force on November 27th, 2026, with early application occurring under the transition period. The changes are to promote warmer, healthier homes and flexibility around thermal compliance.

Fig 1 Minimum R- Values

Building element	Climate zone					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Roof	R6.6↑					
Windows	R0.37↑		R0.46↑		R0.50↑	
Wall	R2.0↑			R2.0		
Slab-on-ground floors	R1.5↑			R1.5↑	R1.6↑	R1.7↑
Other floors	R2.5↑			R2.8↑	R3.0↑	

What is H1 Efficiency?

H1 efficiency states the minimum building requirements for retaining heat and artificial lighting. The standard aims to promote energy-efficient homes. H1 applies to new buildings and alterations to existing buildings.

H1 does not apply to bathrooms, *non-habitable spaces* or *off-grid dwellings*.

There will be two ways to comply with H1 efficiency under the changes. For buildings under 300sqm the calculation method can be used. The thermal resistance of the proposed house is compared to a model house in the formula ([H1/AS1, Table 2.1.2.7](#)). As a result, you can insulate an area more to compensate for another space. This can be done manually, but the [Branz tool](#) makes it easier.

Thermal modelling is used on more complex buildings. For houses larger than 300sqm, it is the only path of compliance without getting an engineered solution. Using this method, specialised software is used to model the heat loss of a building. Unlike the calculation method, a professional would be required.

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What are the key changes to H1?

- Timber framing is presumed to have a *thermal bridging percentage* of 38% to better account for the heat transfer that occurs through framing.
- Minimum insulation *R-Values* have increased, which raises the required performance requirements.
- The removal of minimum *Construction R Values* for Concrete Slab Floors, Heated Floors, Ceiling and Walls.

H1 Requirements for Renovations: Extensions, and Thermal Performance:

H1 applies when alterations are made that affect the thermal performance. This includes the increase of glazing or adding an extension to the house.

If the expansion or addition of a new window increases the glazing percentage by 2%, then the H1 standard applies (*Calculated by the Branz Tool*). Extensions are treated as new builds and must comply with H1.

After any alterations, the same amount of thermal performance should be achieved. Any change that has a negative effect on existing performance should be offset with insulation elsewhere. (LBP, 2021)

H1 Compliance for New Builds: Higher Insulation R-Values and Greater Flexibility:

All new houses need to comply with H1. New builds will be built with a higher standard of insulation. Not only would cost savings be considerable over the life of the building but also realised in the construction cost. Instead of a prescribed standard, flexibility allows areas to be insulated cost-effectively through clever thermal design.

Conclusion: Energy Efficiency in New Zealand homes:

In conclusion, the changes to H1 Efficiency offer flexibility for new and existing houses. This results in mass energy savings and the futureproofing of New Zealand houses. Higher requirements mean that the houses outperform their predecessors and cause a significant ripple in the construction industry. For further information, feel free to reach out to our support team.

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