

# Housing Modification Services (HMOD)

## Operational Guidelines

**OCTOBER 2016**

This is a living document and will be updated as required

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# 1. Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines are intended to be used by:

- ACC Case Owners
- ACC's contracted suppliers of Housing Modification Services
- ACC's contracted suppliers of Housing Assessment Services

**NOTE** - Contracted suppliers of ACC's **Social Rehabilitation Assessment Services** and **Housing Modification Services** must follow these documented processes when engaging in the housing assessment process for ACC clients.

For ACC Case Owners and Assessors these guidelines are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the delivery of Housing Modification Services.

# 2. What are housing modifications?

Housing modifications assist clients to live as independently and safely as possible by removing structural barriers and/or adding fixed features in their homes to meet their identified injury-related needs.

ACC is responsible for assessing our clients' injury related needs and providing the appropriate home/workplace modifications required to meet those needs.

ACC can modify residential premises in New Zealand in which the client lives or proposes to live and which are owned, rented, or otherwise lawfully occupied by the client.

ACC may consider workplace modifications under vocational rehabilitation. All referrals for workplace modifications must be referred to the Housing Panel for consideration of the need and outcomes to be achieved prior to making a referral to the Housing Modification Service.

## Who can receive housing modifications?

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A client is eligible to receive housing modifications if they have:

- an accepted claim, and
- an entitlement to receive funding for housing/workplace modifications (social or vocational).

## Exclusions

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ACC is unable to provide funding to modify:

- hospitals
- hostels

- hotels or motels
- rest homes
- other institutions, e.g. schools

ACC contracts with specialist supplier/s of Housing Modification services who work with Housing Assessors, Clients, their family/ whānau and ACC staff to identify the most practicable and cost effective housing/workplace modification solution/s to meet our clients' injury-related needs. This may include, where appropriate, temporary solutions within the client's home or workplace to enable them to return home/work safely until permanent modification solutions can be undertaken.

**ACC's contracted supplier/s for the Housing Modification Service are:**

<Name>

Phone: ()

Freephone:

Website:

Email:

## What the Housing Modification Service supplier/s do

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The Housing Modification Service supplier/s assist ACC and our contracted Housing Assessors to identify and provide clients with the most appropriate housing modifications to meet their injury-related needs. This is achieved through the provision of:

- professional/technical advice to assessors and ACC staff to assist in identifying the most appropriate housing modification solutions for clients
- information and advice to clients and their families/whānau regarding the housing modification process and timeframes
- project management, building consultancy and building contractors to work in consultation with clients, their family/whānau, housing assessors and ACC to identify, document, cost and undertake the most practicable and cost effective modification options that meet all legislative requirements and standards.

The Housing Modification Service supplier/s is/are responsible for managing housing modification projects on behalf of ACC. They may sub-contract some parts of the housing modification project to other third party suppliers.

## What's covered by the Housing Modification Service?

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### Grab-rails

- Installation of internal/external grab-rails.
- Note - excludes custom-made or one-off handrail solutions that require fabrication.

### **Minor Housing Modifications**

This includes any modifications that do not require building consent and may include but are not limited to:

- minor ramps less than 1m in height
- decks/landings less than 1m in height
- low rise lifts
- stair lifts (chair)
- custom-made or one-off internal and external handrails that require fabrication
- door widening
- easy steps less than 1m in height
- fencing/gates
- hand-held showers.

### **Standard Modifications**

This includes any modifications that require building consent and may include but are not limited to:

- ramps exceeding 1m in height and/or requiring multiple changes in direction
- decks/landings in excess of 1m in height
- bathroom modifications including wet area showers
- stair lifts (platform)
- covered transfer areas
- fencing/gates (building consent required)
- kitchen/laundry modifications.

### **Complex Modifications**

This includes any modifications that require building consent and extension to the footprint of the existing dwelling and may include, but are not limited to:

- additional bedrooms
- ensuite bathrooms
- extension of existing living spaces
- through-floor lifts
- new builds

## What isn't covered by the Housing Modifications Service?

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The Housing Modification Service specifically excludes:

- housing modifications to hospitals, hostels, hotels, motels, rest homes, schools or other institutions
- the removal of housing modifications that are no longer required
- repair or replacement of any housing modifications
- the provision of Social Rehabilitation Housing Assessment Services

## Housing Modification Panel for consistent decision making

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The Housing Modification Panel helps ACC Case Owners make robust decisions about funding home/workplace modifications that are linked to clients' injury-related needs and that support their rehabilitation outcomes. This panel also gives advice on good practice and communicating with clients and other parties involved in housing modifications.

The Panel is internal to ACC and comprises ACC staff subject matter experts (SMEs) nationwide. The Panel is led and chaired by ACC's Manager Home Modifications. The SMEs undertake two key roles:

- attend weekly Housing Modification Panel meetings where housing modification approvals above the ACC Team Manager's delegated authority are discussed, along with applications that require some support or guidance. ACC Case Owners also participate in Panel discussion
- provide subject matter expert advice to colleagues regarding housing modification matters that are out of the ordinary or complex or not otherwise covered by the information available on CHIPS (ACC's online resource for policy and process information)

## 3. Assessment and referral for housing modifications

The information below outlines how to identify and address a client's housing modification needs, which includes referring them for an assessment and commencing the referral to the Housing Modification Service.

### Identifying the need for housing modifications

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An ACC Case Owner or a health professional can identify that a client has a need for housing modifications.

The table below outlines the process for each housing modification classification.

Classification	Process
Grab rails (urgent or non-urgent)	The ACC Case Owner submits an ACC2610 directly to the Housing Modification Service.  No purchase order is required if the purchase and installation of grab rails costs less than \$1000 excl GST (non-urgent) or \$1500 excl GST (urgent)
Minor, Standard or Complex modifications (or the housing modification is yet to be determined)	The ACC Case Owner makes a referral to a Social Rehabilitation Housing Assessor who will accurately assess and identify the client's injury-related needs.

#### JOINTLY FUNDED HOUSING MODIFICATIONS

If a client has a pre-existing medical condition or disability, and requires housing modifications to meet this need, as well as for a covered personal injury, the client's ACC Case Owner should refer this to the Housing Modification Panel.

## Referral to a housing assessor

ACC Case Owners will use the ACC81 to make the referral to a Housing Assessor for an assessment. ACC staff should refer to information on CHIPS (ACC's online resource for policy and process information).

## Assessing a client's injury-related needs

The Housing Assessor will contact the client and arrange to assess their injury-related needs. During the assessment, the assessor must, in the first instance, consider whether equipment solutions will meet the client's needs before recommending housing modifications. Where an equipment solution is considered appropriate the assessor should follow the process for ordering rehabilitation equipment outlined in the Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Services (MRES) contract (see section 10 for more information about equipment). Temporary housing modification solutions, which allow the client to return home as soon as practicable, must also be considered.

Once the assessment has been carried out and if a housing modification is indicated, the assessor will complete:

- an ACC263 Housing Assessment Report (Minor Modifications) or an ACC257 Housing Assessment Report (Standard & Complex Modifications) detailing the injury-related need, issues with the current environment and the outcomes that will be achieved by providing housing modifications.
- Where MRES equipment (see Section 10 for further definition) is also required the assessor will order it from **accessible**, (ACC's contracted MRES supplier) by completing an equipment request online at <https://acc.accessableonline.co.nz>.

**NOTE** for each piece of equipment requested, the assessor must clearly document the intended rehabilitation outcome.

## Professional advice

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The suppliers of Housing Modification Services have a team of professional advisors, including allied health professionals and individuals with housing and building industry experience, who will provide ACC and assessors with advice and guidance during the assessment process including:

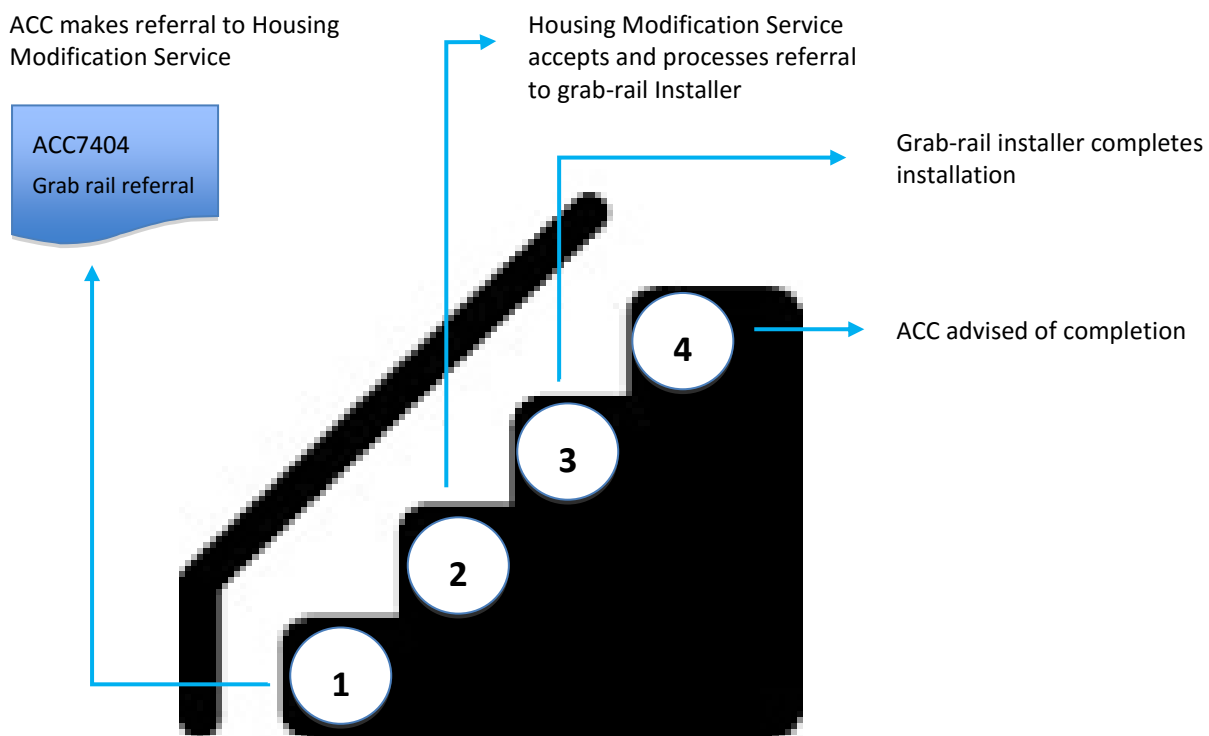
- advice relating to the technical aspects of housing modifications
- potential equipment or modification options to meet the client's injury-related need
- support with decision-making and clinical reasoning
- peer reviews of assessments to make sure that the assessment recommendations align with the client's rehabilitation outcomes and injury-related needs

## 4. Processes

### Grab-rail

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The following diagram explains the process for the installation of grab-rails (internal/external) excluding custom-made or one-off grab-rail solutions that require fabrication.

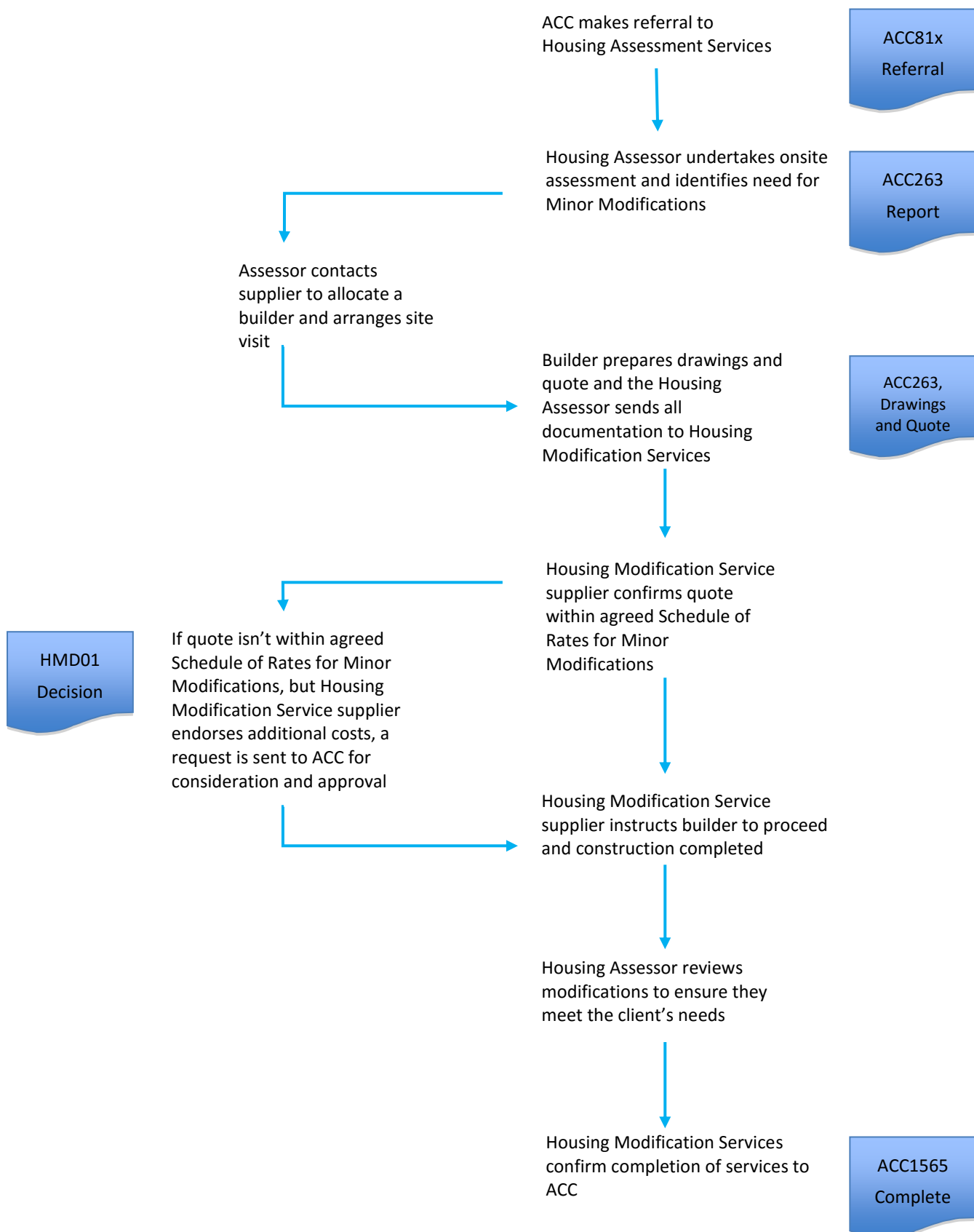


**Urgent requests** - installation completed within 48hours of receipt of referral

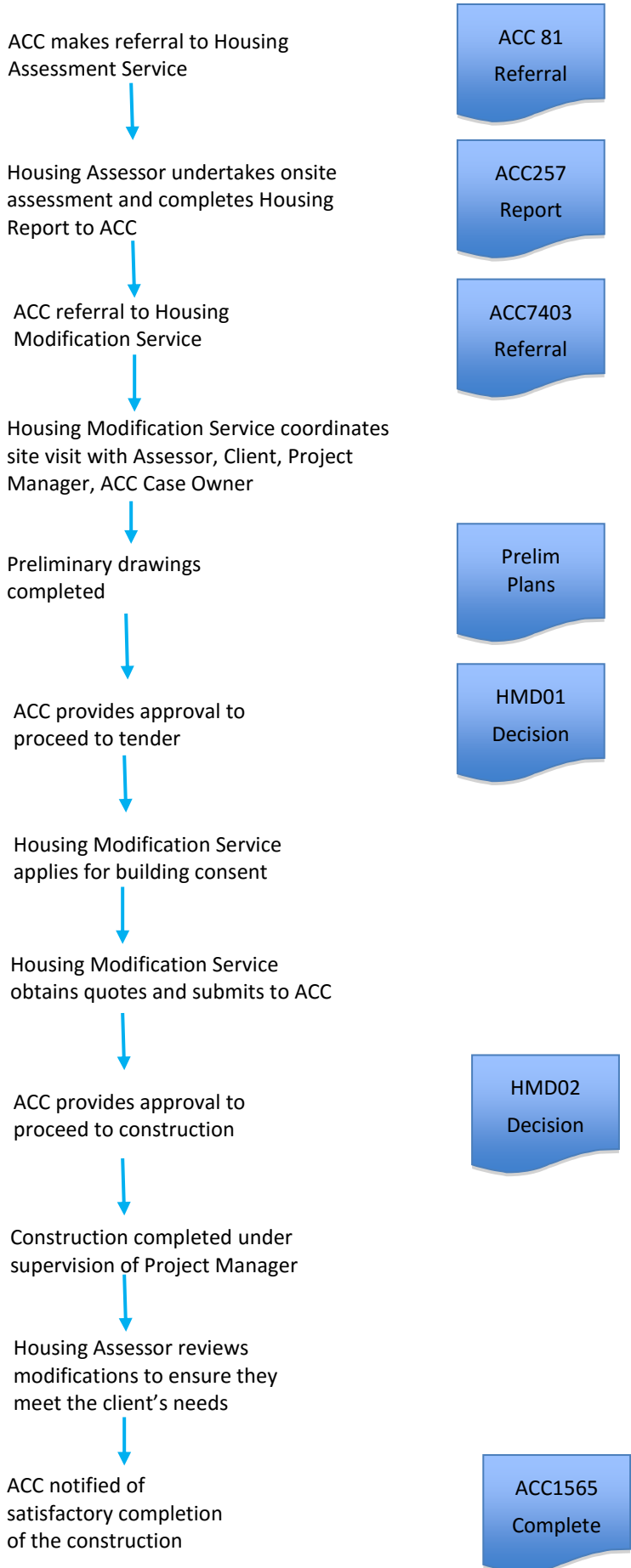
**Non-urgent requests** - installation completed within 5 working days of receipt of referral



## Minor modifications



# Standard and complex modifications



## 5. Roles and responsibilities

When housing modifications are required they can involve a number of different people and agencies to achieve a good outcome. It is important that all parties take note of their responsibilities in the process.

### The client and their family/whānau will:

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#### For grab rails only

- obtain written consent from the Property Owner (if the client doesn't own the property) for the installation of the grab rails

#### Before beginning any modifications

- advise the Property Owner (if the client doesn't own the property) that ACC is considering modifications to the property.
- participate in a housing assessment with an ACC contracted Housing Assessor
- discuss, with the Housing Assessor, their injury-related needs, and likely issues with the current home environment that might get in the way of them achieving their agreed rehabilitation outcomes
- discuss and finalise the proposed modifications, as identified on the preliminary drawings, with ACC, the Housing Assessor and Project Manager, to identify the essential modifications required to meet the injury-related need.
- read complete, sign and return the ACC1564, plans or documentation required in order for the request for funding to continue (this includes part-payment or cost contributions they will be making)
- liaise with the Project Manager to agree access to the home, arrange a start date, and to schedule and agree a timeframe for the work
- work with their ACC Case Owner to make arrangements for alternative accommodation, if this is required while the modifications are in progress and the home cannot be occupied
- contact the ACC Case Owner directly if dissatisfied with the process regarding funding for the purchase of home modifications

#### During the modification process

- inform the Project Manager of any issues or concerns with the building work
- communicate with the Project Manager directly regarding any questions they may have regarding the building work

### **On completion of the housing modifications**

- work with the Housing Assessor and Project Manager to undertake a final assessment to ensure the completed modifications meet their injury-related needs

### **The property owner will:**

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#### **Before the commencement of any modifications**

- review and discuss the plans and specifications of the proposed housing modifications with the Client (where the Client is not the property owner), their family or whānau and the ACC Housing Assessor to gain a clear understanding of the scope of works and the process involved
- provide written agreement for the proposed home modifications to be carried out (ACC1563)
- discuss, agree and document with the Project Manager, the method of construction and disposal of any fixtures, fittings or materials that will be removed or affected during the course of the home modifications
- confirm and document with the Project Manager any items they wish to retain, that will need to be removed during construction
- agree with the Project Manager the extent of 'make good' required to the immediate areas where fixtures, fittings, walls, floors etc, surrounding the modifications that have been affected
- discuss with the Project Manager any additional remedial work that is required on the property before the modifications can be undertaken
- agree in writing to be responsible for any costs associated with additional work they require over the agreed injury-related home modifications and the payment arrangements
- liaise with their insurance company to identify whether the insurer has any specific requirements regarding modifications to the property

### **The ACC case owner will:**

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#### **Before the commencement of any modifications**

- provide the client with information explaining the housing modification process (ACC1564) and their roles and responsibilities
- submit a referral to a Housing Assessor to assess the client, consider their injury-related needs, and likely issues with the current home environment in achieving their agreed rehabilitation outcomes
- provide the Housing Assessor with any information that may be relevant to the housing assessment.

- ensure that information which is personal, but not relevant to the modification process, is not provided unnecessarily to the Housing Modification Service supplier, for example, the entire Support Need Assessment report.

**For Standard and Complex modifications only**

- review the Housing Assessment Report to ensure the proposed solution meets the agreed client rehabilitation outcomes, and submit a referral to the Housing Modification Service supplier where housing modifications are required to meet the client's injury-related needs
- inform the client and assessor that following assessment, a referral has been made to the Housing Modification Service
- attend the initial site visit and consider, with the client, Housing Assessor and Project Manager a range of home modification options to determine the most appropriate and cost effective solution(s) that will meet the Client's injury-related needs to achieve the agreed rehabilitation outcomes
- review the preliminary plans and ACC457 report following the site visit. Identify the delegation holder and approve or decline the preliminary plans and advise the Housing Modification Service supplier of this instruction. Discuss the preliminary plans with the client and ensure that they are in agreement and that they are provided with the support needed to understand the plans, including who to contact with questions
- review and approve the final working drawings and tender recommendations
- provide the client with a decision letter clearly identifying ACC's agreed contribution toward the housing modifications
- provide the Housing Assessor and Housing Modification Service supplier with a copy of the decision letter and adjust the purchase order in line with the decision letter in a timely manner to facilitate the process.

**During the modification process**

- attend site meetings with the client, housing assessor and Project Manager (as required)
- consider and respond to any requests for variations/changes to the agreed modifications to ensure these will meet the client's injury related needs

**On completion of the housing modifications**

- ensure that any agreed outcomes/actions are finalised e.g., a decrease in attendant care, cessation of alternative accommodation etc. and that any further assessments required are scheduled following completion of the housing modifications
- ensure an additional code is added to the assessment purchase order for the completion visit
- ensure the Housing Modification Service supplier's purchase order reflects all approved costs

## The housing assessor will:

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### Before the commencement of any modifications

- work with the client, their family/whānau, caregivers, support people and other rehabilitation services e.g. Spinal Rehabilitation Services, to assess the client's functional abilities, limitations, injury-related needs and identify the outcomes to be achieved
- discuss with the client practicable solutions that could meet their injury-related needs, including equipment solutions that will meet any injury-related needs in a more timely and cost effective manner
- consider temporary housing modification solutions
- explain the process for assessment and completion of housing modifications to the client
- support the client to select suitable housing (where this is identified as a more appropriate option) that will meet their injury-related needs and can be practicably modified (if required)
- meet the timeframes and key deliverables identified in their ACC contract
- use the correct ACC reporting forms (ACC263 and ACC257) and provide a clear rationale and description of the proposed modification solution(s), including options that have been considered, and identify why the proposed solution represents the most appropriate and cost effective solution to meet the client's injury-related needs to achieve the agreed rehabilitation outcomes. Provide clear information regarding the client's equipment and the specifications of each item
- ensure they clearly identify any client preferred housing modification options
- work with the Project Manager to clearly identify and deliver practicable housing modification solutions that will meet the client's injury-related needs
- sign off on the plans and specifications with the client, Project Manager and ACC, to confirm that the requested specifications will meet the client's injury-related needs
- where the client has identified a preferred option, confirm in writing that the client's design/specification will meet their injury-related needs

### During the modification process

- complete onsite visits with the Project Manager while the modifications are in progress (where required and necessary)
- consider and respond to any requests for variations/changes to the agreed modifications to ensure these will meet the client's injury-related needs

### On completion of the housing modifications

- meet onsite with the Project Manager to ensure that the modifications meet the Client's injury-related needs and complete the certificate of satisfactory completion ACC1565

## Housing Modification Service supplier/s will:

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### Before the commencement of any modifications

- ensure that ACC is not identified as a contracting party at any stage of the housing modification process
- maintain and validate a schedule of rates for commonly purchased housing modifications
- be responsible for managing Housing Modification projects on behalf of ACC whether these projects are completed directly by the Supplier or sub-contracted by the Supplier to a third party
- provide technical support and advice to ACC and the housing assessor on potential modification solutions that will meet clients' injury-related needs in a practicable cost effective manner
- provide information and advice to clients regarding the housing modification process and expected timeframes
- engage project managers, building consultants and building contractors to work in consultation with the client, housing assessors and ACC to identify, document, cost and undertake the most practicable and cost effective modification option(s) including validating on ACC's behalf the competitiveness of quotes
- review the technical aspects of the proposed housing modifications and engage any technical expert opinion and advice where this is indicated
- consult with the client, housing assessor and ACC if any technical challenges are identified with the proposed housing modifications which could interfere with the ability for the proposed housing modifications to be completed
- provide agreed copies of the plans and specifications (preliminary and working including all variations) to the Client, Housing Assessor, Property Owner and Project Manager

### During the modification process

- respond to any issues which arise during the building process and facilitate a resolution where a dispute has arisen ensuring an appropriate escalation model is used to communicate these to ACC
- communicate to ACC any variations to the agreed plans and specifications that have been agreed between the Project Manager, client and Housing Assessor and once approval has been obtained from ACC, engage the building consultant/ architect/ designer to update the working drawings and specifications
- meet the timeframes and key deliverables identified in their ACC contract
- provide a freephone help desk function that will quickly and accurately respond to client questions
- maintain an online real-time project management tracker to enable the client, ACC and Housing Assessor to easily identify progress on their housing modification project.

### **On completion of the housing modifications**

- submit the ACC1565 Notice of Housing Completion to ACC

## **Housing Modification Service project manager will:**

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### **Before the commencement of any modifications**

- provide onsite advice to the Housing Assessor and work with them and the client and their family/whānau to determine the most cost effective housing modification solution(s) that will meet the Client's injury-related needs
- provide options for scopes of work and estimates when requested by ACC
- obtain fixed price quotations based on the approved plans and specifications
- facilitate the tender process (where relevant) and advise building contractors of the outcomes of this process
- provide the property owner with information explaining the housing modification process and their roles and responsibilities
- obtain approval from the property owner prior to commencement of any modifications
- obtain all necessary consents at the start of the building process and the consent compliance certificate for the Property Owner on completion of the work
- negotiate a timetable of the approved work between the client, property owner and the building contractor and advise ACC
- discuss, agree and document with the property owner, before the start of the housing modifications, the disposal of any fixtures, fitting or materials that will be removed during the course of the modifications
- confirm and document with the client and their family or whānau any items they wish to retain that need to be removed during construction
- agree and document with the property owner, the extent to which they will 'make good' the immediate areas where fixtures, fittings, walls, floors, etc. surrounding the modifications have been affected
- discuss with the Property Owner any issues identified regarding potential rectification work required before the start of the modifications and retain a written record of this

### **During the modification process**

- monitor and inspect the building work as it progresses and ensure that any documentation required is completed at the conclusion of the work and all relevant quality standards are met



- where applicable manage any building work variation processes and assist in the resolution of any disputes between the Client and the Building Contractor ensuring that these are clearly communicated to the Housing Modification Service supplier

#### **On completion of the housing modifications**

- notify the Housing Assessor and attend a final sign-off site visit with the Housing Assessor, to ensure the modifications have been completed and agreed and meet all relevant standards

Note that for Minor and Standard Modifications that don't need a separate Project Manager/ building consultant/ architect/ designer, the building contractor will carry out the role of Project Manager.

### **Housing Modification Service building consultant/ architect/ designer will:**

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#### **Before the commencement of any modifications**

- on request from the Housing Modification Service, work with the Project Manager, Housing Assessor, Client and their family/whānau to prepare preliminary drawings and specifications of the proposed housing modifications to meet the injury-related needs
- on approval to proceed with working drawings, prepare detailed plans and specifications of the agreed housing modifications
- submit all plans and specifications to the Housing Modification Service

#### **During the modification process**

- on request from the Housing Modification Service supplier, amend/update the plans and specifications to reflect any agreed variations/changes identified and agreed with ACC during the course of the modifications

### **Housing Modification Service building contractor will:**

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- act as Project Manager for Minor and Standard Modifications that don't require a separate project manager/building consultant/architect/designer
- act in accordance with relevant codes of conduct and good business practice in all dealings with the client, their family, whānau and support people
- ensure that at all times any information regarding the client, their family, whānau and support people is held in the strictest confidence and their privacy is maintained
- make no approach to the client, their family, whānau or support people for the purpose of obtaining additional work

#### **Before the commencement of any modifications**

- liaise with the project manager/Housing Modification Service supplier/housing assessor as required

- discuss with the client, their family/whānau and property owner the specifications of the proposed modifications and ensure that all people are aware of any potential impacts the proposed modifications may have on the surrounding environment or on their responsibility to upgrade existing facilities
- provide itemised quotations based on the proposed plans and specifications
- discuss, agree and document with the property owner before the start of the housing modifications the disposal of any fixtures, fitting or materials that will be removed during the course of the modifications
- discuss with the property owner any issues identified regarding potential rectification work required before the start of the modifications and retain a written record of this
- inform the project manager/ Housing Modification Service supplier of any additional and / or private work requested by the client. Additional work outside of the agreed injury-related need constitutes a separate contract between the client and the building contractor
- engage in a separate contract of work with the client, their family or whānau directly where a part payment is required by the person towards the cost of their modifications
- negotiate a start time and schedule of work with the client, their family/whānau and advise the Housing Modification Service supplier of these time frames. The start time will be negotiated with the project manager if relevant

#### **During the modification process**

- commence work within the agreed timeframes
- inform the client, project manager/Housing Modification Service supplier of any likely time delays in completing the work
- liaise with the housing assessor/ project manager regarding certain specifications where it has been documented that these specifications were to be determined on site
- complete the housing modifications in accordance with the specifications as provided by the designer or Project Manager (as applicable) and any relevant building code regulations and product specifications. Where any change to the agreed plan is required, inform the housing assessor and the project manager/Housing Modification Service supplier
- undertake all work in a safe manner, complying with applicable regulations, standards, legislation, building codes and by-laws
- take full responsibility for all sub-contractors' work and ensure they act in a professional manner including the requirement to act in accordance with their relevant codes of conduct
- ensure that any disruption and restricted access to essential facilities, showers, toilets and kitchens is kept to a minimum

### **On completion of the modifications**

- arrange the final Code Compliance Certificate inspection and complete the required documentation
- obtain and send a copy of the building consent (if necessary) and Code Compliance Certificate to the Property Owner and the Housing Modification Service supplier
- ensure that instructions for the care, use and operation of equipment included in housing modifications, such as a low rise lift, are provided to the Client their family or whānau or their carers and support people
- remedy all defects arising from defective materials or workmanship which have been identified before the end of the maintenance period

## **6. Site visit**

### **Conducting the initial site visit**

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The project manager will ensure that all relevant parties to the modification process have been given sufficient advance notification to attend the initial site visit.

The project manager is responsible for leading the site visit meeting and will take written notes of the key points discussed, any actions, timeframes and persons responsible for delivering on the action. Copies of these notes will be provided to the client, housing assessor, ACC Case Owner and Housing Modification Service supplier (this includes ensuring that any party unable to attend the site visit receives a copy for their information) within 24 hours following the site visit.

Topics for discussion at the initial site visit will include, agreeing and documenting:

- Roles and responsibilities.
- Identification of the injury-related needs and family/whānau considerations, including any potential equipment solutions that may meet these needs and negating or minimising the requirement for housing modifications.
- The method of any construction and disposal of any fixtures, fittings or materials that affected during the course of the home modifications.
- Identification of any items that the Property Owner wishes to retain, that will need to be removed during construction.
- The extent of 'make good' to the immediate areas where fixtures, fittings, walls, floors etc. surrounding the modifications have been affected.

## **7. Help desk**

The Housing Modification Service suppliers will provide a freephone help desk function.

This will be a point of contact during business hours (8.30am – 5.00pm, Monday – Friday) to respond to queries, including questions generic to the building modification process or specific to individual client modifications.

The help desk will be staffed by sufficiently skilled and qualified personnel to quickly and accurately respond to queries raised. Where required the help desk will triage the call to their Professional Advisory Service for a response.

## 8. Preliminary drawings

Preliminary drawings will be provided and will include at a minimum the following:

- A covering letter explaining how the preliminary drawings are to be read.
- A version control; this should clearly identify the version number, date of creation and any changes from previous versions.
- Signoff; this will include at a minimum the name of the housing assessor and the project manager and the date signed.
- The existing layout of the property.
- The proposed layout of the property following modification.
- A specification list of the proposed fixtures and fittings to be included in the modifications

## 9. Completion inspection and signoff

Once notified by the builder that the modifications have been completed as agreed a final completion inspection and signoff will be conducted by the housing assessor, client and project manager.

The project manager will confirm that the modifications have been completed as per the agreed plans and specifications and that they meet all relevant standards. The housing assessor will confirm with the client that the modifications meet their identified injury-related needs and are fit for purpose.

On successful final inspection the Housing Assessor and Project Manager will complete the ACC1565. The Project Manager will submit the ACC1565 Certificate of Satisfactory Completion to the Housing Modification Service supplier signalling successful completion of the housing modifications.

## 10. Equipment solutions

### Supply & maintenance of equipment solutions

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Equipment which may be included as part of a housing modification can be categorised in three ways:

## **1. Permanent housing equipment**

When equipment is required that is going to be permanently installed in a client's home and is not expected to be returned due to the likely damage removal would cause, then that item is considered to be a housing modification. This equipment will not be removed. This equipment must be part of an approved housing modification.

Warranty repairs are the responsibility of the Housing Modification Service supplier to manage.

Ongoing (non-warranty) repairs, maintenance and servicing are the responsibility of the client. If the permanent equipment item is beyond economic repair the client can discuss options for replacement with ACC.

Examples of permanent housing equipment include:

- hardwired / fixed door locking / opening system
- hardwired environmental control / security system, e.g. amber control system
- hardwired heat pump / air conditioning system
- hardwired specialised lighting or alerting system
- through floor / multi floor lift – internal or external
- fixed handrails, e.g. in level access shower or toilet or stairs via minor modifications
- fixed fold down shower seat or shower tray/bed including height adjustable option
- stair platform lift – internal or external – curved rail / customised to home / wall mounted internal stairs
- fixed ceiling mounted overhead hoist system
- fixed stair chair lift – internal or external
- bidet
- dishwasher and dryer
- modular fencing
- fixed play equipment
- non-slip matting

## **2. Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Service (MRES) housing equipment**

When equipment is required that needs fixing / specialised installation as part of a housing modification but can be easily removed (to be moved to a different location if the client moves, or taken out when it is no longer required), then that item is considered MRES Housing Equipment. This equipment must be part of an approved housing modification.

To order MRES housing equipment included as part of a housing modification, complete an ACC096 Equipment Order Form and submit to the ACC Case Owner along with:

- The appropriate housing modification reports
- Quote/s for the equipment
- Specifications for the equipment

Once the housing modifications are approved, and if no refurbished equipment is available, the ACC Case Owner will forward the ACC96 order along with a purchase approval number to **accessible** (ACC's contracted MRES supplier) to provide new or refurbished equipment. **accessible** will coordinate the delivery of the equipment with the Housing Modification Service supplier who will complete the installation of the equipment.

Repairs, servicing and collection of MRES housing equipment are the responsibility of **accessible**.

Examples of MRES housing equipment include:

- low rise lifts
- modular ramp
- portable bathroom solutions, e.g. Highlander or Lowa Towa bathroom units

### **3. Managed Rehabilitation Equipment Service (MRES) equipment**

When equipment is required that doesn't require fixing or specialised installation as part of the housing modification and it can be easily moved to another location, the item is MRES equipment. If required, this equipment doesn't need to be part of an approved housing modification and can be ordered via the MRES equipment ordering process ([click here](#)).

Repairs, servicing and collection are the responsibility of **accessible**.

Examples of MRES equipment include:

- suction handrail
- portable heater
- portable air conditioner
- portable dehumidifier
- portable overhead hoist (i.e. not fixed to the home)
- portable ramps/threshold ramp
- personal care bathing equipment, e.g. multi chair

## Summary of equipment solutions

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The three types of equipment solutions are summarised in the table below:

	Permanent Housing Equipment	MRES Housing Equipment	MRES equipment
Permanently installed, non-returnable?	Yes	No	No
Fixed to the home but can be easily removed and reinstalled elsewhere?	No	Yes	No
Part of the housing modification?	Yes	Yes	No
Need to complete an ACC096?	No	Yes (submit to ACC Case Owner with ACC263/257)	Yes (submit direct to <b>accessible</b> )
Does ACC maintain ownership of the equipment?	No	Yes	Yes
Responsibility for non-warranty repairs and maintenance	Client	MRES	MRES

## Removal of MRES housing equipment

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If **accessible** receives a request for MRES housing equipment to be picked up and the equipment needs to be de-installed, **accessible** will contact the ACC Case Owner.

The ACC Case Owner will request that the Housing Modification Service supplier obtains a quote for removal of equipment. When the quote is received the ACC Case Owner will raise a purchase order to the Housing Modification Service supplier for the de-installation of equipment and make good.

The Housing Modification Service supplier will coordinate the removal of the equipment and will contact **accessible** to arrange collection of the equipment.

## Disputes

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Where a dispute arises between **accessible** and the Housing Modification Service supplier about the installation, warranty or removal and collection of MRES housing equipment included in a housing modification:

- it will be escalated to **accessible** and Housing Modification Service supplier's General Managers to resolve

- it will be escalated to the respective ACC MRES and Housing Modification Service Contract Managers to determine an outcome if it is unable to be resolved.

## 11. Considerations for workplace modifications

Workplace modifications may be provided to ACC clients as part of Vocational Rehabilitation Services if there is an assessed injury-related need, the modifications are required to address that need to assist the client to return to work, and are not the responsibility of the employer to provide.

### Should the employer be responsible for providing an accessible workplace?

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- Employers are required by law to provide reasonable accommodation to all staff to ensure they are able to perform their work easily and efficiently.
- In the case of disability, reasonable accommodation can entail modifications or adjustments which will, for example, allow a job applicant with a disability to participate more equally in a workplace. It can involve physical adjustments such as ensuring access to a building or modifying the way a job is done, for example allocating aspects of the job to another employee.
- There are standards for accessibility of workplaces and other buildings and guidance on how to ensure the physical environment is barrier-free.
- NZ Standard 4121 'Design for access and mobility: Buildings and associated facilities' gives requirements for making buildings and facilities accessible to and useable by people with physical disabilities. It provides a means of compliance with the New Zealand Building Code and the Building Act 2004.

### Providing ACC-funded workplace modifications

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If the workplace modifications are required as a result of a covered claim, aren't the legal the responsibility of the employer, and will provide no additional benefit to the employer, ACC can contribute toward the cost of the modifications.

All requests for the provision of workplace modifications are to be referred to the ACC Housing Panel for consideration and advice.

Follow the process outlined in section 4 to identify the appropriate injury-related needs and identify the required workplace modifications.

## 12. Operational Policy

Use these guidelines when considering specific housing modification requests from clients. Note that these guidelines should not be used in isolation as each situation should be considered on its individual merits.



## Accommodating sleepover caregivers

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Some clients may require constant supervision and care overnight. This care is usually required after the client has settled in bed, until immediately prior to them waking, or being attended to in the morning. This type of care is known as sleepover care, and providers of this care are known as sleepover carers.

In these cases, there must be an area set aside for the carer in the client's home, while the carer is engaged in a sleepover duty. The sleepover area must be located near the client's bedroom.

Note: If sleepover care is provided by someone who normally lives in the client's home, ACC will not usually consider providing sleepover accommodation as the carer will already have their own sleeping area.

All options to meet the need for caregiver accommodation or sleepover care should be considered, for example:

- Accommodating the sleepover caregiver on a foldout couch/bed in an area within the client's home
- Having an 'awake' care shift and asking the carer to undertake quiet domestic duties while concurrently providing sleepover care
- Promoting a residential support facility as an option for the client to consider may be an appropriate way of meeting their needs

ACC may consider options for including additional space to accommodate a sleepover caregiver, provided the sleepover carer is not ordinarily resident in the home where the modifications are planned.

## Additional modifications

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An additional housing modification is a further modification to the client's current home, this is usually because the client's injury related needs may have changed and the former modification may no longer meet their needs. These requests should be managed in the same way as an initial application.

## Bathroom Modifications

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### Toilets & ensuites

ACC may consider funding an additional toilet or ensuite if:

- It is more cost-effective than enabling the client to use the existing toilet, or
- It can be justified on the grounds of privacy, convenience, or family situation.

### Bidets

Installation of a bidet can be considered where it can be demonstrated that:

- The bidet will result in the person being able to use the toilet independently and safely or;
- It will reduce the level of paid or unpaid support the person receives.

### **Wet-area showers (level-access showers)**

A wet-area shower can be considered where the client is unable to safely use the existing bathing or shower facilities and the use of more cost effective options such as equipment will not meet their identified injury related needs.

### **Vanity units and hand basins**

A wheelchair accessible vanity or hand basin can be considered where:

- The client can independently use the hand basin
- The client can be supported to use the hand basin.

## **Heating ventilation & air conditioning (HVAC)**

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HVAC is the mechanical systems that provide thermal comfort and air quality in an indoor space. ACC may consider funding a heat pump if the Housing Assessor identifies that the client requires heating and/or cooling as a direct result of their injury and there are no other means available to them to appropriately regulate their body temperature and the need is over and above that which is normally expected in the home environment.

ACC does not require additional medical support for a heat pump if the client has spinal cord injuries (SCI) of C5/C6 or above, or if the client has sustained a serious traumatic brain injury (TBI) resulting in them having difficulty in maintaining an even temperature.

ACC considers heating in a bathroom under the same conditions.

## **Cost Contribution**

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A cost contribution is an amount that ACC has agreed to pay towards part of a home modification when the property owner wishes to do one of the following:

- Undertake additional work on their property over and above the extent of the modifications which have been recommended by the Housing Assessor required to meet the client's injury related needs. This may be cosmetic or remedial work or the installation of new fixtures and fittings that are over and above the standard required to meet the injury related need.
- Use their own builder, who is not contracted to ACC's housing modification service, to complete the modifications.
- Renovate or build a new home that incorporates features to meet the client's identified injury related needs.

The level of the cost contribution from ACC is based on the costs associated with the approved solution to meet the client's injury related needs that have been identified by ACC's contracted Housing Assessor and Housing Modification Service.

## Covered access ways

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A covered access way is the provision of a roof and (if required) walls over or around the main access route of a house. This is typically the area between the home's entranceway and the vehicle exit area.

Note: A covered access way does not include cover for a vehicle.

The assessment should highlight the following points to be considered during decision making:

- Whether the client is at risk of being exposed to bad weather
- The ability of the client or their attendant to use wet weather gear
- The number of times the client uses their vehicle on a daily basis and the nature of the vehicle use (e.g. driving to work or school)
- The surface of the area between the main access and carport or covered transfer area (e.g. sealed or unsealed)
- The geographical location of the client's home, and whether the main access area is exposed to bad weather.

## Covered transfer areas

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A covered transfer area is a small covered area that provides shelter for the Client and equipment as they transfer to and from the vehicle. The dimensions, degree of enclosure, and surface requirements of the area are determined by the:

- Extent of shelter required during transfers
- Type of vehicle the client is transferring to and from
- Specifics of the site.

Note: Covered transfer entitlements do not include providing shelter for a vehicle. For more information, see Upgrades to a carport or garage (or similar).

ACC will consider a contribution toward the cost of building a covered transfer area, if it is confirmed that the client:

- Has either an existing vehicle that meets their assessed injury-related Transport for Independence (TFI) needs, or an entitlement to purchase or modify a motor vehicle to meet these needs
- Takes considerable time transferring to and from their vehicle because of their injury (including stowing or securing their wheelchair and other mobility aids)

- Is exposed to the weather for a considerable time while transferring to and from their vehicle and this will significantly affect their health
- Has existing vehicle cover arrangements that will not meet the assessed need as they transfer to and from their vehicle
- Has assessed needs for covered access requiring modifications to the existing vehicle cover arrangements that are estimated to be either too costly or impractical.

### **Upgrading to a carport or garage (or similar)**

ACC doesn't generally fund carports or garages and, therefore, if a client (or the property owner) wishes to upgrade an approved covered transfer area to a carport or garage, or add additional architectural features, they must fund the extra cost themselves.

In these circumstances, ACC will require confirmation from the Housing Assessor that the proposed privately funded enhancements will continue to meet the client's assessed needs.

### **Using a mobility taxi as an alternative to a covered transfer area**

Some clients could potentially have their transport needs met by a mobility taxi or similar. In these situations, a covered transfer area would not normally be required because:

- The Client is likely to be transferred into the mobility vehicle in their wheelchair and will receive help with both the transfer and the securing of the wheelchair to the vehicle
- An attendant (usually the mobility taxi driver) can assist the client with wet weather gear when required
- Mobility taxis (or similar) may be the most cost-effective option to meet the client's transport needs, as it may only be a short-term requirement.

## **Decoration**

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ACC normally redecorates only the areas affected by the injury related modifications. For example, if a doorway is widened then ACC funds the redecoration of the wall affected, but not the whole room. If the modification requires a new room to be constructed, then the decorative finishes in this area should be of a standard durable quality.

## **Environmental controls**

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An environmental control device is a form of assistive technology which enables people with significant disabilities/injuries to independently access equipment in their environment. ACC considers requests for environmental controls (electronic door locks, automatic window blinds, etc.) where this will provide the client with independence and can demonstrate a reduction in the need for attendant care. Environmental control devices are generally items of equipment that will need to be installed.

## Features lost during housing modifications

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The housing assessment report should identify any housing features that may be wholly or partially lost in a housing modification and the potential impact the loss those features will have for other family members/ residents of the house.

Examples of features lost in housing modifications:

- It is more cost-effective to convert part or all of a bedroom into an ensuite or second bathroom, rather than altering the exterior walls of the house
- Replacing the only bath in the home with a wet-area shower where there are also very young children living in the home.

## Floor & window coverings

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Normally, ACC would expect to make good the original floor coverings in areas affected by modifications. Where this is not possible, for example where the original floor covering is not suitable for use, then ACC may contribute towards the cost of suitable floor coverings.

Normally, ACC would expect original window coverings to be re-used.

## Garage door openers

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Automatic garage door opener should only be considered where the garage provides the primary point of access into the house for the client and the client is as a result of their injury, unable to open the existing garage door. ACC does not consider requests for automatic garage door openers where this is solely so the client can park their vehicle.

## Grab-rails

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ACC funds grab-rails when they are identified as necessary for the client to remain safely in their home. Grab-rails are defined as non-customised handrails (“off-the-shelf” items). These can be installed as an Urgent request (within 48 hours of request) or Non-Urgent (within 5 working days of request).

Grab-rails are considered housing modifications, and ACC does not fund their removal when they are no longer required.

## Handrails

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ACC funds handrails when they are identified as necessary for the client to remain safely in their home. Handrails are different to grab rails as they require customisation and installation. Handrails are

considered under the Minor Housing Modification process, ACC does not fund the removal of handrails when these are no longer required.

## **Insulation**

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All insulation of modified areas must meet the minimum standards set out in the current New Zealand building code. ACC only considers additional insulation over and above the requirements of the NZ Building Code when it has been identified by the Housing Assessor as required to meet the specific injury related needs of the client.

## **Internal Door Widening**

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Widening internal doorways can be considered where the existing doorway is too narrow to allow access to essential rooms. Before the Housing Assessor recommends door widening they should consider other more cost effective options such as installing “hospital hinges” which are designed to allow a door to swing clear of the opening allowing the widest possible door opening.

## **Kitchen modifications**

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ACC will only consider kitchen modifications where these are assessed as necessary to enable the client to remain independent when preparing food and drink in their home. The housing assessor should consider equipment solutions or other options that could meet the client’s needs and will reduce the need for extensive kitchen modifications.

## **Light switches, power sockets and additional lighting**

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The relocation or installation of additional light switches, power sockets and additional lighting should only be considered where it is required to meet the client’s injury related needs. The Housing Assessor should consider the injury related needs over standard household requirements.

## **Matching the existing property**

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If possible, the modifications to the property should match the existing internal and external theme and design of the property. For example, if the property is clad in weatherboard or brick, or is of Lockwood construction, then if possible any extension should be constructed in a similar manner.

## **Modifications to an additional or subsequent home**

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### **Additional home modifications**

Modifications to a subsequent home are usually considered in the following circumstances:

- The client moves to take up paid employment
- The client leaves their parents' home to live independently from their family
- The client is a child whose parental circumstances have changed triggering the need for housing modifications to another home. For example, the parents have separated and the child is living at both parent's properties).

### **Subsequent home modifications**

ACC's contribution to modifications to a subsequent home can include providing access to suitable qualified professionals to ensure the subsequent home:

- Has some or all of the necessary injury-related features the client requires, or
- Is suitable for modifying, or
- Will incorporate necessary injury-related features (e.g. housing plans for new homes).

Every application for housing modifications must be considered on its own merits, regardless of whether ACC has already contributed to housing modifications. Funding modifications to subsequent homes may be declined where the client moves on a regular basis without adequate reason, or where such activity is providing undue financial advantage to the client or their family.

### **New houses & relocation**

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If appropriate, ACC assists with funding the construction of a new house or assists the client to move to another house. ACC will only fund the additional features required to meet the client's injury related needs.

#### **New house**

If a client decides to build a new house, ACC can only consider contributing to the additional, injury-related costs: the difference between the standard plan and the modified plan to meet the identified needs.

Automatic garage door openers, level entry, accessible wardrobes, ensuites, and attached garages are often included as standard in current designs and therefore should not attract additional costs.

ACC will work with the Housing Assessor and Housing Modification Service to identify a room-by-room breakdown showing for each item the standard cost, the new cost, and the amount ACC should consider funding.

#### **Relocating versus modification**

Sometimes the most cost-effective alternative is to relocate and make modifications to a new home, rather than make changes to an existing one. The client and their family/whanau should as far as practical and reasonable choose a house or requires minimal modification to meet their injury related needs.

Recommended accessible design features to consider when purchasing a new home should include:

- A flat section with drive on access
- Level entry/minimal steps into the home
- Bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and main living areas on the ground level.

ACC can engage our Housing Assessor and/or Housing Modification Service to work with the client and their family/whanau to assist in identifying appropriate houses they may be considering.

## Ramps

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Ramps typically constructed of wood or concrete and are regarded as permanent solutions. In most cases ramps should be specified to NZ Standards 4121:2001. Where this is not the case a clear rational needs to be provided to justify the deviation from the standard.

Where there is uncertainty about the client's ability to remain in their home, a modular ramp should be considered. A modular ramp is constructed of aluminium is of a modular design and can be removed when no longer required (refer MRES Operational Guidelines on how to access Housing Equipment).

## Requests for a specific builder

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Where a client requests that the modifications to their home are carried out by a specific builder (maybe one they have used before) inform the Housing Modification Service of this request and they will ensure that this builder is included when they request tenders for the work.

If the requested builders tender is more expensive than the cost effective tender, the Client will be required to contribute to the extra cost if they want their requested builder to carry out the work.

If the requested builders tender is considerably cheaper than the other tenders, the Housing Modification Service will work with the builder to ensure they have included all specified work in their tender.

## Requests for a specific building consultant/architect/ designer

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If a client wishes to privately engage a qualified building consultant/architect/ designer to manage their housing modifications instead of ACC's contracted Housing Modification Service, inform the Housing Modification Service of this request.

Note:

- ACC will not contribute toward the cost of the client's preferred building consultant/architect/ designer as ACC continues to employ our Housing Modification Service as our expert advisor in the provision of professional oversight of the injury related component of the modifications.



- All plans and work pertaining to the injury related modifications undertaken by the client's privately contracted building consultant/architect/ designer must be peer reviewed by our Housing Modification Service and Housing Assessor to ensure they meet the injury related needs of the client.

## Room Extensions

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Extensions to the client's home should only be considered where the identified injury related modifications cannot be accommodated within the existing structural footprint of the home and no other practicable options are available to meet the client's needs.

## Second emergency exits

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ACC may provide a second emergency exit (where practicable) to clients whose ability to exit their home quickly and safely is permanently affected by their mobility status.

Note: In providing a second exit, ACC follows the Standards New Zealand, NZS 4102:1996: Safer house design (Guidelines to reduce injury at home)

The housing assessment report, must address the client's:

- Mobility status, and
- Ability to exit their home quickly and safely.

### **Is it necessary for the Client to have two exits?**

A second exit from the client's bedroom is not necessary if there is an alternative exit in an adjacent room or a hallway that the client can access safely and quickly. The Housing Assessor should provide this information in their report.

### **Second emergency exits from multi-level homes and apartment buildings**

In some homes, for example multi-level homes and apartment buildings, a second emergency exit is not possible. The most likely exit from these buildings is via a single exit, usually a through-floor lift. This should be noted in the Housing Assessor and Housing Modification Service reports.

Where through-floor lifts are installed, the Housing Modification Service and Housing Assessor must ensure that the lift can rise and fall in a power failure. This is important when other residents also use the lift, as the lift may not be left at the level the client needs in an emergency.

During the assessment process, the Housing Assessor should explain to the client the limitations of relying on a single exit (through-floor lift), particularly in emergency situations. This information should be documented in the assessment report.

Note: It is recommended that any client relying on a single exit in emergencies make this known to the emergency civil defence controller in their area, and find out about emergency evacuation procedures for the building.

## Smoke alarms

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ACC funds battery-operated smoke alarms when required, but not hardwired systems. Batteries should be checked regularly, and changed as necessary, by the client, their carer or their family/whānau.

## Storage & cupboards

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ACC considers funding additional storage space or cupboards or modifications to existing storage spaces to accommodate injury-related needs or equipment when identified by the Housing Assessor.

The housing assessment report must consider pragmatic options that may be available e.g. where there is a need to store injury related consumables, consider changing the re-ordering cycle to monthly, or more frequently, to reduce the space required for storage.

## Utilities (water, electricity, gas)

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ACC does not generally fund basic services (water, electricity, gas).