

Fact Sheet

**A guide to consenting requirements for farm bridges
and culverts**

November 2012

Introduction

This fact sheet provides information on the consenting requirements relating to the construction of farm bridges and culverts.

The fact sheet has been prepared to assist farmers who are planning to bridge water courses on their farms to ensure that stock is excluded from these environmentally sensitive areas.

Definition of a farm bridge

For the purposes of this fact sheet a farm bridge is considered as a self supporting single span structure, single lane in width, with abutments anchored to the banks of a stream or river. The span would be constructed above the stream or river's normal flow level.

Definition of a culvert

For the purposes of the District Plan a culvert is considered a building (Rule 38.4.6 Building Setbacks from Water Bodies) if it is greater than 300mm in height, or it is 2.2m or less in height and has a total ground coverage of 9m² or less. For the purposes of a fact sheet a culvert is considered to be a tunnel carrying a stream or open drain under a road or railway.

In which circumstances is resource consent required?

Resource consent is required for most farm bridges and culverts as they will usually breach Rule 38.4.6 Building Setbacks from Water Bodies of the District Plan, due to the fact that most bridges and culverts will be anchored to the bank of the stream or river.

It should be noted that the matters open for Council planners to consider in assessment of a resource consent application include:

- effects on the natural character of the area
- effects on the natural functioning of the ecosystem
- effects on landscape and heritage values (including effects on archaeological features)
- effects on public access (esplanade reserves and easements for access) and
- effects on river maintenance and hazards (including flooding).

Information regarding resource consent applications can be found on Council's website www.wdc.govt.nz

Is a building consent required?

A building consent is a document issued under the Building Act 2004 that confirms that plans and specifications for proposed building works meet the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code. You need to make application and obtain a building consent before any work is undertaken on a project that requires a building consent.

A building consent will be needed for any bridge or culvert where a person can fall more than 1.5 meters. (Refer to Building Act 2004 Schedule 1).

The process of considering and issuing a building consent ensures that any building work is safe, durable, and does not endanger health, both for the current users of the building and to protect those who may buy and use the property in the future.

What is a building consent exemption and how do I apply for one?

In some circumstances, Council is able to approve applications for building works (that would normally require a building consent) to be exempted from that process under the Building Act 2004, Schedule 1 clause (k).

Application must be made on the appropriate form (refer www.wdc.govt.nz) and work may not commence until exemption has been made. Although a structure like this may be exempted it still needs to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code. An applicant will need to demonstrate to Council that compliance will be achieved and that there will be adequate follow through to ensure this. Usually this will involve the commissioning of a professional structural engineer (CPeng) to design and furnish a design producer statement (PS1) as well as verifying construction with a producer statement PS4.

Information regarding building consent applications and exemptions can be found on Council's website www.wdc.govt.nz

Other helpful information

It should be noted that the publication “Culvert and Bridge Construction – Guidelines for Farmers” can be found on the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/land/culvert-bridge-oct04. This publication provides useful information on the site planning and construction of culvert and bridge structures.

Is consent from the Northland Regional Council required?

If the proposed bridge or culvert affects the bed or banks of the stream or river it is likely that resource consent is required under the Regional Water and Soil Plan. Mr Geoff Heaps, Land Management Consents Officer of the Northland Regional Council can be contacted on (09) 438 4639 for information on the requirements of the Regional Water and Soil Plan.