

QLD New Home Stage-by-Stage Checklist

When to book each inspection, what gets checked, and the red flags to stop on - from slab to handover. Written by builder-inspectors who have built homes for a living. Keep this with your building contract.

Why stage inspections? In a QLD new build you pay the builder in stages (typically base, frame, enclosed, fixing and practical completion). Each payment is your leverage. Once a slab is poured or a wall is plastered, what's underneath can't be checked again. An independent inspection at each stage - before you pay - is the only way to know the work is right while it can still be fixed cheaply.

Your Build Timeline

Inspection	Builder's payment stage	When to book	What we check	Fee*
1. Pre-pour	Base / slab	Day before the concrete pour	Steel, pods, plumbing drains, termite protection, set-out	\$550
2. Post-pour (slab)	Base / slab	3-14 days after the pour	Slab level + flatness, cracks, edge beam, penetrations	\$550
3. Frame	Frame	Frame + trusses up, BEFORE sheeting	Tie-downs, bracing, lintels, trusses, plumb + straight	\$550
4. Pre-plaster (lock-up)	Enclosed	Day BEFORE insulation goes in	Wall wrap, flashings, services rough-in, noggings	\$550
5. Waterproofing	Enclosed / fixing	Membrane cured, BEFORE tiling	Showers, floor wastes, falls, hobs, waterstops	\$550
6. Practical completion (PCI)	Practical completion	Day of handover walk-through, BEFORE final payment	Every room, every fitting - the full defect list	\$660

*Standard home up to 220m², inc GST, same-day report. Larger homes: custom quote. Re-inspections 50% of the stage fee.

Book early

- Ask your supervisor for the pour date, frame date and tiling date as soon as you sign - and tell us. Stages move fast; a pour can be booked with 24 hours' notice.
- Check your contract lets you (or your inspector) on site at each stage. In QLD you can ask for access - put it in writing.
- Don't pay a stage claim until the inspection report is back and the builder has responded to the defects.

1. Pre-pour - the day before the concrete

- Engineer's slab design + soil report on site
- Edge beams + pods match the engineer's drawings (tape measure)
- Reinforcement on bar chairs, correct cover, extra steel at re-entrant corners
- Plumbing drains in the right spots (kitchen island, ensuite, laundry)
- Termite protection at every pipe penetration
- Vapour barrier intact - no tears, laps taped
- **Red flag:** Anything "we'll add after the pour" = jackhammer work later. Once concrete is down, nothing under it can be fixed.

2. Post-pour - before you pay the slab claim

- Level: max 10mm in any room, max 12mm over any 3m (QBCC S&T)
- No cracks wider than 2mm; none at re-entrant corners
- Shower set-downs at design depth
- Termite barrier intact around the slab edge
- Engineer sign-off + concrete test results provided
- **Red flag:** Builder asking for the slab payment before engineer sign-off = don't pay yet.

3. Frame - before sheeting goes on

- Tie-downs at every point on the engineer's schedule
- Bracing type + quantity matches the bracing plan
- Lintels over every opening wider than 900mm
- Trusses at the spacing on the truss layout, tied down at both ends
- Walls plumb + straight (QBCC: max 4mm in 2m)
- Frame plans + truss layout on site
- **Red flag:** Missing tie-downs or bracing are hidden forever once the plaster goes on. This is the stage people regret skipping.

4. Pre-plaster / lock-up - before insulation

- Wall wrap lapped 150mm and taped around windows
- Window + door flashings in place
- Noggings for towel rails, TV mounts, grab rails, kitchen cabinets
- Plumbing + electrical rough-in in the right spots
- No water staining after rain
- **Red flag:** Insulation booked before the pre-plaster check = nobody sees the frame and services again.

5. Waterproofing - before tiling

- Shower walls waterproofed to min. 1800mm
- Puddle flange at every floor waste, membrane bonded into it
- Shower floor falls to the waste - no ponding on a hose test
- Waterstop at bathroom doorways
- Wet-area board (not standard plasterboard) behind showers + baths
- Waterproofing certificate for each wet area
- **Red flag:** Most leaking showers are a membrane problem nobody checked before the tiles hid it.

6. Practical completion - before final payment

- Every tap, toilet, GPO, light + appliance tested
- Doors, windows, fly screens, locks + keys
- Tiles, grout, silicone, paint + cabinetry finish
- Smoke alarms, handrails, balustrades
- Termite certificate + all compliance certificates
- Home cleaned + all contract inclusions installed
- **Red flag:** "We'll fix that under warranty" = the builder trying to close the contract. Warranty is for defects, not unfinished work.

Questions to Ask Your Builder Before You Sign

- Can my inspector attend at pre-pour, frame, pre-plaster, waterproofing and PCI?
- How much notice will I get before each stage? (Ask for 48 hours.)
- Will I get the engineer's sign-offs and waterproofing certificates with each claim?
- How are defects from my inspection reports fixed and re-checked before I pay?
- What is the process if we disagree on a defect?

Book the Full Stage Package

Pre-pour, frame, pre-plaster, waterproofing and PCI booked up front - one team, one report style, same-day reports at every stage. Booking multiple stages together is the most cost-effective way to cover your build. Call for a package quote.

vginspect.com/book | 07 3180 8041 | info@vginspect.com



Want the detailed checklist for each stage (17 categories, 30 red flags)? Download them free at vginspect.com/downloads.

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General information based on the QBCC Standards & Tolerances Guide, AS 2870, AS 1684, AS 3740:2021, AS 3660.1 and the ABCB Housing Provisions. Your contract, approved drawings and engineer's details are the primary references. Not a substitute for a licensed inspection or legal advice.