

QBCC Builder—Low Rise Employee Trade Scope Guide

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Purpose: This guide summarises common building trades and work activities that a genuine employee can generally personally perform for a company holding a QBCC Builder—Low Rise contractor licence, where the work falls within the company's licensed Low Rise scope and is appropriately supervised. It also identifies occupationally licensed work for which the individual worker must hold the relevant licence or authority.

1. Builder—Low Rise scope

QBCC states that the Builder—Low Rise scope includes building work on Class 1 and Class 10 buildings; building work on Class 2 to 9 buildings with a gross floor area not more than 2,000 m², excluding Type A or Type B construction; and non-structural building work regardless of building class or gross floor area, subject to the exclusions and occupational licensing requirements applying to the licence.

QBCC also states that, in most cases, an employee does not need a QBCC licence when carrying out building work as an employee of a licensed contractor. An employee does require an appropriate QBCC licence if they become responsible for overseeing or directing the building work, building quality control, or compliance with plans and specifications.

2. Full trade and work scope table

The table below separates common building trades and work activities from occupational work. The left-hand column does not mean every conceivable activity within a named trade is automatically authorised: the particular work must remain within the Builder—Low Rise licence scope, and comply with applicable legislation, approvals, codes and standards.

Employee can generally personally perform under the company's Builder—Low Rise licence	Individual must hold the relevant occupational / statutory licence or authority
Carpentry	Plumbing
Timber framing — wall, floor and roof framing	Drainage
Fix-out carpentry	Gas fitting
Doors, frames, architraves, skirtings and internal trim	Mechanical services work
Decks, verandahs and associated timber structures	Fire protection work — subject to current exemptions / transitional provisions
Formwork	Termite management — chemical
Concreting	Waterproofing

Employee can generally personally perform under the company's Builder—Low Rise licence	Individual must hold the relevant occupational / statutory licence or authority
Footings, slabs and associated concrete building work	Electrical work — regulated separately under Queensland electrical safety legislation
Steel fixing / reinforcement installation	
Bricklaying and blocklaying	
Brick and segmental paving associated with building work	
Cabinet making	
Kitchen cabinetry and installation	
Bathroom and laundry cabinetry	
Wardrobes and fitted storage	
Joinery	
Shopfitting work within the permitted building scope	
Wall and floor tiling	
Floor finishing and covering — hard sector	
Plastering — drywall / plasterboard	
Plastering — solid	
Painting and decorating	
Roof tiling	
Roof and wall cladding	
Metal roof cladding	
Metal wall cladding	
Metal fascias and gutters	
Rainwater goods and associated flashings	
Glass, glazing and aluminium	
Metal fabrication and erection — structural	
Metal fabrication and installation — non-structural	
Structural steel erection associated with permitted building work	
Stonemasonry	

Employee can generally personally perform under the company's Builder—Low Rise licence	Individual must hold the relevant occupational / statutory licence or authority
Structural landscaping forming part of permitted building work	
Termite management — physical systems	
Sheds, carports and garages within Low Rise scope	
Insulation installation	
General demolition / removal incidental to the building project, subject to separate WHS / asbestos / demolition requirements	
General labouring and associated building work within the licensed scope	

3. Important licensing distinctions

Employee versus subcontractor: The employee exemption is different from subcontracting. QBCC states that a subcontractor engaged by a licensed builder generally needs the appropriate contractor licence for the subcontracted building work.

Occupational work: QBCC identifies plumbing, drainage, gas fitting, chemical termite management, fire protection and mechanical services as occupational work for which an employee personally performing or supervising the work requires the relevant occupational licence, regardless of the value of the work. Waterproofing should be treated as requiring the appropriate licence for the individual carrying out the work. Electrical work is separately regulated under Queensland electrical safety legislation.

Supervision and quality control: An employee who becomes responsible for supervising or directing building work, ensuring the work is of a competent standard, or ensuring compliance with plans and specifications requires an appropriate QBCC licence for the scope being supervised, such as a site supervisor or nominee supervisor licence.

Fire protection transitional position: The current Builder—Low Rise scope temporarily authorises specified fire protection work until 2 May 2030, including installation and maintenance of fire collars, fire-rated penetrations and fire-rated joint sealing, and fire and smoke walls and fire-rated ceilings, within the stated Builder—Low Rise scope. Other fire protection work remains subject to fire protection licensing requirements.

4. Recommended compliance wording

A company holding a QBCC Builder—Low Rise contractor licence may generally have genuine employees personally carry out building work that falls within the scope of the company's Builder—Low Rise licence without each employee holding a separate QBCC trade contractor licence.

This can include common building trades such as carpentry, framing, formwork, concreting, bricklaying and blocklaying, cabinet making, joinery, wall and floor tiling, plastering, painting, roof tiling, roof and wall cladding, fascia and guttering, glazing, structural and non-structural metalwork, steel fixing and other associated building work forming part of the licensed Low Rise building work.

This employee exemption should not be confused with subcontracting. An independent subcontractor engaged to carry out building work for a licensed builder will generally need to hold the appropriate QBCC contractor licence for the work being subcontracted.

There are important exceptions for occupationally licensed work. An employee who personally performs or supervises plumbing, drainage, gas fitting, mechanical services, fire protection, chemical termite management or waterproofing work must hold the appropriate occupational licence or authority unless a specific statutory exemption applies. Electrical work is separately regulated under Queensland electrical safety legislation and must be carried out by appropriately licensed electrical workers.

5. Source references

- QBCC — Builder—Low Rise: qbcc.qld.gov.au/licences/apply-licence/available-licences/builder/builder-low-rise-2025-01-blr-checklist
- QBCC — When you need a licence: qbcc.qld.gov.au/licences/start-your-career/when-you-need-licence
- QBCC — All other trade licences: qbcc.qld.gov.au/licences/apply-licence/available-licences/other-trade
- QBCC — Which licence type you need: qbcc.qld.gov.au/dz/node/166

Disclaimer. This document is a general licensing guide and is not legal advice or a project-specific determination. The exact licensing position can depend on the contract, employment relationship, building classification, construction type, value, precise work activity, occupational licensing, WHS / high-risk work requirements, statutory exemptions and current QBCC legislation. Confirm unusual or high-risk scopes with QBCC and the relevant regulator before relying on this guide.