

March 2026

How we authorise compliance certifiers

This policy's purpose

This policy sets out how we manage the authorisation of compliance certifiers (certifiers) under the Health and Safety at Work (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2017 (the Regulations). It supports consistent, fair, and risk-based decision making for the authorisation process.

This policy should be read alongside:

- [Authorisations](#)
- [When we use third parties](#)
- [What we expect from third parties and what they can expect from us and](#)
- [How we do fit and proper person assessments \(hazardous substances\)](#)

The compliance certifier authorisation system

The Regulations require compliance certificates for sites, people, and plant in situations where hazardous substances are at a workplace. Examples of such certificates include hazardous substance locations, stationary container systems and certified handlers. Part 6 of the Regulations allows us to authorise certifiers to issue certificates. A certifier may be an individual or an organisation that employs or engages individuals to perform the functions of a compliance certifier.

The authorisation system includes:

- applying to be a certifier
- authorising an individual or organisation to be a certifier
- auditing a certifier

- varying and/or renewing an authorisation, and
- when necessary, investigating complaints and reasonable concerns, suspending, or cancelling an authorisation.

The Regulations set out our obligations for managing this system and certifiers' obligations as our third parties.

Principles for decision making

In addition to regulatory requirements, we follow principles for good regulatory decision making.

Our decisions are:

- documented
- lawful
- consistent
- transparent
- fair and reasonable
- evidence based
- timely
- proportionate, and
- accountable.

We expect certifiers to always meet their legal and regulatory obligations.

How we manage applications

Review

We start by reviewing the application. All applicants must comply with the requirements in regulation 6.5, and regulation 6.4 if the applicant is not an individual. Applicants must provide us with sufficient information to be able to assess the regulatory requirements.

We only assess an application once the application is complete. We consider an application to be complete when:

- the application includes all the required information to enable assessment
- documents are properly signed and/or notarised, and
- payment has been received and processed.

If an application is incomplete, we give applicants a fair opportunity to provide missing information. We won't continue to assess applications that are incomplete after an applicant has been given a reasonable opportunity to complete it. We advise the applicant if we decide to stop.

Assess

Applications that are complete and eligible progress to the assess stage. We're required to consider the application and make a decision within 20 working days. If we anticipate that the assessment will take longer than 20 working days, we notify the applicant.

We take a risk-based approach to authorisations decision making. This means that effort is proportionate to the risk associated to the application. Risk depends on the application type (for example, variation or renewal), the compliance categories applied for and the applicant's compliance history.

During the assess stage, we evaluate the applicant's competence and fitness to carry out the role of a certifier. This includes confirming that the applicant holds the qualifications and experience required for authorisation, including renewal or variation of an existing authorisation.

If we require further information to support the assessment, we request it and provide the applicant with a reasonable timeframe to respond. If the applicant doesn't respond or doesn't provide the requested information, we proceed to assess the application based on the information available. In such cases, we may refuse the application.

We assess for:

- knowledge of regulatory requirements
- relevant and adequate practical experience
- evidence that the certifier's likely to perform their functions in an objective manner that promotes safety, and
- fitness through a fit and proper assessment.

For variations of an existing authorisation or a renewal, we also consider the certifier's history (including previous audit reports).

Where an applicant is not an individual (an organisation) we must be satisfied of the following:

- that every individual employed or engaged by the applicant to perform the functions of a certifier meets the qualification requirements of regulation 6.6

- that the assessment by International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) shows those individuals can perform the functions of a certifier
- the applicant, each officer of the applicant, and every individual employed or engaged by the applicant to perform the functions of a certifier is a fit and proper person to be authorised
- the applicant is likely to ensure that the functions of a certifier are performed in an objective manner that promotes safety, and
- there is no reasonably foreseeable conflict of interest between proposed certifier work and any other work, or there are documented procedures in place for transparently and appropriately managing any conflict of interest that may arise.

We may put any conditions we deem appropriate on a new authorisation, variation, or renewal. Conditions are likely to reflect complexities associated with sites, equipment or substances, or ability, knowledge and experience of the applicant.

At the end of the assess stage we make a recommendation to our decision maker. This is based on the evidence the applicant has provided to us and the relevant information we already hold, for example compliance history. The recommendation may be to authorise, authorise with conditions, vary the authorisation or refuse the application. We ensure assessments are peer reviewed to support fair and consistent outcomes.

If we're proposing to refuse an application, we:

- notify the applicant
- let them know the reasons for the proposed decision, and
- let them know they can make a submission with information on why they believe the application should be granted.

If the applicant makes a submission, we consider this information when making our final decision.

Decide

This stage is about making and recording the authorisation decision. We follow the decision-making principles in this policy.

The decision maker is a person who holds the relevant delegation and has no conflict of interest with the applicant.

The decision maker considers the full assessment of the application and any responses provided by the applicant to determine the appropriate outcome. We promptly notify the applicant of the outcome of their application. If we refuse an application, we notify the applicant of the reasons for it and their right to appeal.

Term of authorisation

An authorisation can be issued for up to five years but may specify an earlier expiry date if we're satisfied a shorter term is required. This may be if we identify a need to reassess the applicant's knowledge and skills within five years.

We consult with the applicant before the decision to issue a shorter term.

Compliance certifier organisations

The Regulations provide that a certifier that is not an individual may only apply for authorisation if it's accredited to a recognised industry standard by IANZ on behalf of the Accreditation Council. We must be satisfied with the IANZ accreditation assessment of individuals employed or engaged by the applicant to undertake the functions of a certifier.

We work with IANZ to ensure that the technical criteria necessary to obtain and maintain accreditation are no less than the criteria we require to authorise individual certifiers.

For renewal applications or assessments of compliance history we take into account the accreditation and audit reports provided by IANZ. We may also request that IANZ reassess a certifier's accreditation at any time where we have a reasonable concern about whether they're operating in an objective manner that promotes safety.