



# **BUILD-ZONE** **SURVEY SERVICES**

A guide to your project's  
survey and inspection requirements



# Welcome to Build-Zone Survey Services

Build-Zone Survey Services Ltd (BZSS), part of the Build-Zone brand, manages the Site Inspection process of your build whether it is a Residential or Commercial project, which is needed in order to issue the Build-Zone 10 Year Structural Warranty. We also handle Surveys and Inspections of completed or part-completed buildings for Warranties.



BZSS have partnered with a number of Approved Inspectors (AI's) and specialist Surveyors who are able to offer you a reliable and economical way to manage the inspection process required for the Warranty to be issued. There are two ways in which we will audit your project:

**Technical Audits** – The auditing process for your Warranty. Insurers are covering the build for 10 years and have their own technical requirements. The audit is carried out both in the office and through site visits throughout the course of the build.

**Building Control combined with the Technical Audits** -This process uses a Corporate Approved Inspector and combines the Statutory Building Control function together with the Warranty Auditing to review the build as it progresses. Choosing this option combines both processes resulting in a cost and time saving to you as only one specialist Surveyor needs to visit the site throughout the course of the build. This eliminates any potential differences of opinion between two different construction professionals. The AI's will undertake the Building Control function for you from the start of the project and will communicate and work with you through the inspection and auditing process to the satisfactory conclusion of your build.

The Initial Notice is a statutory requirement and it is your responsibility to ensure it is served to the Local Authority Building Control a minimum of five working days before works commence on site. The AI will help you with this but it remains your responsibility. If this is not served correctly the AI may not be able to undertake the Building Control function for you.

## Who do we use...

Our Partnered Surveyors are carefully selected and have to agree to our Consultancy Agreements. They are continually audited and are familiar with our processes and warranty requirements. They are also able to provide you with other bespoke services including SAP assessments, Air Pressure Testing (APT), EPC, CDM and Party Wall advice at very competitive rates to provide you with a “one stop shop”.



## Building Notice

If you are proceeding with your build under a Building Notice this is possible but we recommend proceeding with extreme caution. Whilst this is possible, we would not recommend proceeding with a new project under this audit route due to the information which is required “up front” of the build. The process could lead to additional audit costs and the possible risk of proceeding without agreement. A number of AI’s we partner with will not wish to get involved with this process if you are considering a new build house.

## Plan Check

The Plan Check is an important part of the audit process and should be carried out as soon as possible, preferably before the build starts. Your allocated AI or Surveyor reviews the drawings and specification for your project against the requirements of the Building Regulations and requests details such as the “Design SAP”. The Warranty Insurers view compliance of the Building Regulations as the start point and the minimum required standard for your build. The Surveyor may request other information depending on the type of project.



## The Build & Visit Process

Depending on the type, size and stage of your build the AI or Surveyor will conduct a number of key stage inspections at various intervals throughout the construction phase.

Please note that not all stages detailed in this document will require a visit as this is very much dependent on the type of project/build.

There are a number of key stage warranty inspections to complete and these are detailed below. If the inspection regime alters due to the size, type and stage of your project, then additional cost(s) will be incurred. If an AI is undertaking the Building Control function for you they may visit the property at additional stages.

You will be advised which inspections are required for your project by the AI/Surveyor. AIs and Surveyors have busy diaries and will require reasonable notice to attend site (this could be up to five working days depending on your location).

# Drainage

At some point during the course of the build, **all** drains must be seen laid and checked so they discharge to the outfall point and all new connections are made correctly. It is at the discretion of the Contractor if an air pressure test is conducted at the time of laying in order to identify any potential leaks prior to covering the drains. In any event, proof of testing of the entire drainage system will be required upon completion of the works.

You are responsible for providing evidence that the drainage system has been checked/inspected by a fully competent and insured person(s). Without independent evidence, the Warranty may be endorsed accordingly or the offer of the Warranty may be withdrawn. In some cases, it is possible to accept specific written confirmation from your Building Control Body that the drainage system has been tested on completion and meets the necessary requirements. The issue of the Building Control Completion Certificate is **not** sufficient evidence and is **not** normally accepted by BZSS or the Warranty provider.





## First Inspection - Foundation Excavations

This inspection needs to be co-ordinated to ensure that the Surveyor arrives at least two hours in advance of the pouring of concrete as sometimes a certain amount of trimming or de-watering of the trench bottoms may be required before any concrete is poured. It is important to bear in mind that if the foundations are to be “pulled” in stages (including underpinning) then this should be discussed with the Surveyor as soon as possible to agree a schedule for any additional inspections required.

For Warranty Technical Audits we only allow for one visit at this stage so if the foundation “pull” is in stages, additional visit(s) may be required which will be over and above the pre-paid survey inspections.

The initial visit is invariably the first opportunity for the Surveyor to fully discuss the project with you in person and comment on when they are likely to want to undertake future visits. Please note that it is your responsibility to call the Surveyor in at the agreed stages.

It is important that a set of Construction Plans should be made available as soon as possible to the Surveyor to enable them to carry out or complete the Plan Check to make sure all the Building Regulations and Warranty requirements have been met. Obviously if anything can be identified at this time it can be discussed and solutions agreed to avoid any delays or abortive work. If any additional issues or works are identified during the course of construction, then these will be advised at the time of the inspection and confirmed either as a Contravention Notice (Building Control) or as a Remediation Notice (Warranty) which is issued to you after the visit.

# Second Inspection - Damp Proof Course/Damp Proof Membrane and Over-site Preparation

To prevent damp ingress at ground level the Damp Proof Course (DPC) will need to be inspected together with the Damp Proof Membrane (DPM) where appropriate. In the event that a Ground Bearing Slab is proposed, the compacted fill and DPM will be inspected.

Provision for effective cross-flow ventilation should also be seen below a suspended ground floor slab such as a beam and block floor.

At this stage it also gives the visiting Surveyor time to reaffirm the remaining programme of inspections with you and to confirm the proposals for the superstructure and the remaining schedule of the build. Again, it is up to you to communicate with the Surveyor to carry out the inspections at the agreed times.



## Third Inspection – Clear Cavities

A clean and clear cavity free from mortar droppings, with correctly positioned insulation, together with appropriately fitted cavity trays, are vital in preventing the horizontal ingress of moisture. It will therefore be necessary to inspect the cavities to establish their condition and the timing for this visit should be agreed with the Surveyor.

If any Remedial Works are identified this will provide sufficient opportunity to rectify any faults and/or provide guidance for the remaining construction. If full or partial cavity installation is proposed there should be no mortar on the cavity wall ties or between layers and the insulation should be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

If your build includes a timber frame, the visit will be undertaken once the frame has been erected and the roof finish completed. This must be before the external wall system has been started. A further visit will then be carried out once the external wall system has been started. This visit should, where possible, be encompassed in the Stage 4 visit.



## Fourth Inspection- Pre plaster

This inspection provides an opportunity to inspect the “Skeleton” of the build including structural elements such as floor timbers, beams and the roof structure together with ‘First Fix’ (electrical and plumbing installations) prior to them being covered up. It is also an opportunity to discuss the requirements that must be satisfied before the Surveyor will be able to conduct the Completion inspection.

For more complex builds such as conversions, extensions or refurbishments, we may require a further visit at this stage of the build to review other aspects of the superstructure, which may include elements such as flat roofs.





## Fifth Inspection - Completion

All works should be completed with the commissioning and completion certificates obtained. These may include but are not limited to HETAS, Gas Safe, Electrical, SAP, Sound and EPC. If any of your build includes an element of tanking or flat roofing, a financially adequate 10 Year Insurance Backed Guarantee for the materials and workmanship will be required by the Warranty provider.

The Surveyor will review the build as a whole now it is complete but may ask for additional information concerning the build including photographs and any 'as built' drawings etc.

If any Contravention or Remediation Notices have been issued during the project and remain outstanding it will delay the issuing of the Completion Certificate and ultimately the issuing of the Warranty Policy.

Once all of the Certificates and Guarantees have been obtained then the AI will be in a position to issue the Building Control Completion Certificate or the Surveyor to complete their Technical Audit. They will then confirm to BZSS allowing us to issue our Technical Audit Assessment Certificate enabling the Warranty to be issued.

# Interim Stage Certificates/Stage Completion Certificates

If finance is involved with your build then your Lender may require Interim Completion Certificates to allow the release of funds. These are sometimes referred to as Architects Certificates or Professional Consultants Certificates.

If you are progressing with a Warranty, BZSS can facilitate these for you and these are included in the Warranty and Survey costs.

If you do not have a Warranty we are still able to facilitate these for you but there will be a small charge for this service. These are termed as Stage Completion Certificates.

In both cases, we will need to know what your Lender stages are as they can vary from the stages detailed above in the Building Control or Warranty process (and in some circumstances we will require a breakdown of the work elements associated with each stage). For Interim Stage Certificates only where a Lender stage does not coincide with those detailed above then we can look for you to provide us with (2-3 external and 3-4 internal) photos of the project where these can be review and the relevant certificate issued.



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