

# Unregistered Builders Blitz

Consumers are being urged to check the credentials of their builder before appointing them, as Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) cracks down on the illegal behaviour of unregistered building practitioners across Victoria.

CAV has written to all registered builders in Victoria, warning of infringement notices to non-complaint builders, aiming to boost consumer confidence in the industry.

CAV administers the *Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995* ('the DBCA') and the *Fair Trading Act 1999* ('the FTA') and can administer infringement notices for non-compliance, with penalties in the thousands.

To add to CAV's warning, Master Builders believes clients face a number of risks if they use a builder who is not registered with the Builders Practitioners Board.

For example, unregistered builders will quite often collude with the client to take on the building permit in the client's own name and thus become an 'owner-builder'.

However, becoming an 'owner-builder' effectively abandons access to consumer protection. For instance, there is no recourse for the defective work the builder may leave the owner, other than civil litigation.

And if the home is sold, the owner-builder is responsible for repairing any major defects found in the home for up to ten years following the project's completion.

Consumers can find a Master builder in their area by visiting [www.mbav.com.au](http://www.mbav.com.au). Registration as a Domestic Builder Unlimited, three years experience running their own business, eight references and prequalification for warranty insurance are the minimum criteria for becoming a Master Builder.

Builders carrying out domestic building work over \$5,000 without being registered could face a penalty of \$5,841.

Builders who are interested in becoming registered can take part in Master Builders Registration Course by calling 9411 4555 for more info.

Brian Welch  
Executive Director  
Master Builders Association of Victoria