

SWEP Prescriber Communique Aids & Equipment Program – Home Modifications Update Changes effective July 1st 2016

Dear Prescriber

As you may be aware from previous communiques, SWEP is introducing a new home modification model. In consultation with regulatory bodies' advice, the new model will incorporate Architects, Builders, Draftspersons, Building Surveyors and Building Inspectors to provide a quality assurance process for clients that receive funding from SWEP.

The new Model

From 1/07/2016 some components of the new model will commence which include Approval in Principle (AIP) and the guidelines for structural and non-structural modifications as detailed below. All current SWEP forms will remain in use until informed otherwise.

Approval in Principle

All applications for home modification to SWEP will be processed using an AIP model. This means that subject to verifying that the information submitted is correct, the appropriate supporting documents have been provided, the modification requested falls within the the [Victorian Aids and Equipment Program Guidelines](#) and that the client is eligible, 'approval in principle' will be granted. Within this model, the Builder, tradesperson and other building professional are only engaged when funding is imminent. An AIP model eliminates Builders having to provide an initial quote followed up with a second quote just prior to the commencement of works.

Home modifications under \$1000

There are no significant changes in the way Prescribers apply to SWEP for this category. As most of the home modifications in this category are considered non-structural, there is no need for Architect or Draftsperson to provide diagrams.

Non-structural home modifications

- The Builder/tradesperson submits to the Prescriber the final diagram(s) and scope of works of the home modifications >\$1000. The Prescriber will then submit these documents to SWEP once they are satisfied that they meet the functional needs of the client. These diagrams must comply with the *SWEP Standards for Home Modifications* which are currently being finalised.
- While engagement of a Building Surveyor/Building Inspector is not mandatory for non-structural home modifications, we will strongly encourage home owners to consider engagement for the more expensive non-structural home modifications. SWEP may use a Building Surveyor/Building Inspector to check compliance as part of SWEP quality assurance processes.

Structural home modifications

- If any structural changes are required the Client and/or Home-owner, in consultation with the Prescriber, will engage either an Architect or Draftsperson to draw the final diagrams and provide a scope of works which must comply with the *SWEP Standards for Home Modifications* which are currently being finalised. The Prescriber will then submit these documents to SWEP once they are satisfied that they meet the functional needs of the client. *(The client and/or Home-owner may be eligible to access funds for home modifications, through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Home Renovation Loan for either [property owners](#) or [renters](#))*
- A Building Surveyor/Building Inspector will be involved and may have input into the design, foundations, concrete slab and frame construction. Any compliance certificates provided by the Building Surveyor must be submitted to SWEP
- Where a building permit is required, the relevant Building Surveyor/Building Inspector must inspect the work to ensure it complies with the permit, Building Act and Building Regulations.

Arrangements for applications submitted before the 1/07/2016

If Archicentre has already provided working drawings and scope of works for applications that have been lodged but not yet ordered by SWEP, these can be used even though Archicentre will not be funded by DHHS to conduct a final inspection. The Client and/or Home-owner has the option of self-funding an Architect/Building Surveyor for this purpose if they wish.

During the interim period, applications for your clients that you have already lodged, but have not yet been ordered by SWEP will not require an Architect to provide a final inspection and sign off on the works. As with the current process, the Prescriber will sign off stating the home modifications meet the functional needs of the client as outlined in the home modification prescription. The client will also continue to sign off at the completion of the home modifications to state the works have been satisfactory completed.

Prescriber feedback

If you are interested in providing feedback regarding the new SWEP Prescriber Guidelines for Home Modifications before they are released or if you have any questions, please contact Narelle Harrison on 03 5333 8115 or Nick Grakini on 03 5333 8128.