

***CONSTRUCTION RISK CHECKLIST > During-construction > Materials Delivery
Delays and Substitutions Approved***

Material Changes Should Never Be Assumed

Material substitutions are common in residential construction. Products become unavailable, lead times change, costs increase or better (or cheaper) alternatives are identified. However, one of the quickest ways to create a dispute is to substitute materials without proper approval.

Just because a substitute appears similar does not mean it meets the design requirements, performance specifications or the client's expectations. It may also void warranties if it is not part of an approved system.

Before any substitution is made, builders should obtain approval from the appropriate parties. Depending on the circumstances, this may include the designer, architect, engineer, manufacturer, client or a combination of these. The approval should be documented in writing and retained with the project records.

Material changes can also affect the programme. If a product is unavailable or delayed, this should be communicated to the client as soon as possible. The impact on cost and timing should be discussed, and the construction programme updated where necessary.

Materials Management Checklist

- 1. Verify all deliveries against the order and specifications.**
- 2. Inspect materials for damage before acceptance.**
- 3. Confirm substituted products are approved in writing.**
- 4. Obtain designer or engineer approval where required.**
- 5. Advise the client of any material changes.**
- 6. Communicate delays as soon as they are identified.**
- 7. Update the programme where necessary.**
- 8. Document client acknowledgement of significant changes.**
- 9. Retain delivery dockets and approvals.**

A few minutes spent checking deliveries, obtaining approvals and communicating changes can prevent defects, delays and disputes later. Because a material substitution agreed and documented before installation is a project decision. However, a material substitution discovered after installation is often a problem.