

Cook Islands Trades Registration System – FAQs

1. Do I need formal qualifications to register?

No.

Formal qualifications are not required. You can register based on your experience, the work you have completed, and references.

2. Will I still be able to work?

Yes.

No existing builder or tradesperson will be prevented from working. The system is designed to recognise your experience and support you to continue working.

3. What are the tiers?

The system uses tiers to match building work to experience and skill level. ICI originally communicated that there would be 3 tier levels. Now, a fourth tier has been proposed.

- Tier 1 – Restricted / Entry Level → Basic level
- Tier 2 – Qualified Builder → Standard residential work
- Tier 3 – Unrestricted / Advanced → Complex or commercial work
- Tier 4 – Specialist e.g., NZ Master Builder Certificate or equivalent.

You can move up tiers over time with more experience and/or qualifications.

4. How will I be assessed?

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Your experience
- Any qualifications (if you have them)
- Your previous work
- Referees
- See the draft application form on the ICI website at: ici.gov.ck/building-trades-registration

5. Will there be support to apply?

Yes.

Workshops and guidance will be provided to help builders and tradespeople complete their applications. The sector will be informed of the workshop/s.

6. What happens if someone does poor work?

The system allows action to be taken where needed, including:

- Suspending or revoking registration
- Addressing misconduct

This helps protect both builders and the public.

7. Why is this system being introduced?

To:

- Improve building quality
- Protect homeowners
- Support skilled builders
- Increase trust in the building sector

8. Do companies need to register too?

Yes.

Trades companies will also be registered and can carry out work based on the level of their highest-tier registered builder.

9. When will this start?

The system will be introduced alongside the new Building Bill, with a transition period to allow time for builders to register. The transition period is proposed to be 6 months from the Bill passing into law. ICI expects the Bill to be passed during 2026.