One Year On:
NZ Building Product Information Regulations

As of December 11, 2023[1], New Zealand implemented new regulations governing the provision of Building Product Information. Nearly a year later, it is essential for industry professionals to reflect on their implications and observe how they have shaped the construction landscape.

Purpose of the Regulations

The regulations were designed to enhance transparency regarding selected building products, assisting designers, builders, and consumers in making informed decisions. By ensuring comprehensive product information, these regulations help building authorities verify compliance with the NZ Building Code and empower owners with insights for effective product maintenance and use.

Background

The need for these regulations is underscored by past industry challenges. The Leaky Buildings crisis continues to have repercussions, with community costs estimated at over $47 billion[2]. Additionally, incidents tied to lightweight cladding and the Grenfell disaster have prompted a re-evaluation of product information standards to prevent similar failures.

Current Requirements for Product Information

Manufacturers and importers are now required to publish specific information about their designated products online. This information must be publicly accessible without restrictions and should include evidence supporting the product's claimed performance. Required information includes:

1. The name and a clear description of the product (or product line from which the product is customised) and its intended use.

2. A product identifier, where applicable.

3. The legal and trading names of manufacturers and, if applicable, importers.

4. Relevant clauses from the building code detailing how the product contributes to compliance, including any limitations.

5. Design, installation, and maintenance requirements.

6. Either a statement that the product is not subject to any warnings or bans, or a description of warnings or bans applicable to the product.

Note: There are two classes of building products, with some minor differences in information requirements. Further details can be found on the Building.govt.nz website.

Challenges Identified

While these regulations are a step forward, challenges remain concerning the accuracy and availability of online product information. Manufacturers are responsible for keeping this information current. However, when products are discontinued, access to this information may become uncertain, leaving asset owners and facility managers with gaps in essential knowledge.

The Solution: Comprehensive O&M Manuals

To maintain access to critical product information, it is crucial for owners and facility managers to include this information in their Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Manuals during project handover. This practice ensures that original product documents and guidance for proper use, maintenance, and repair are preserved, independent of external internet resources.

Though there is speculation that advancements in the "internet of everything" could reduce the need for extensive O&M Manuals, the unpredictable nature of the internet can lead to the loss of important product information. A review of selected projects has shown that valuable information can become unavailable online in a short period, which raises legal concerns for owners and clients regarding compliance with operational and maintenance requirements.
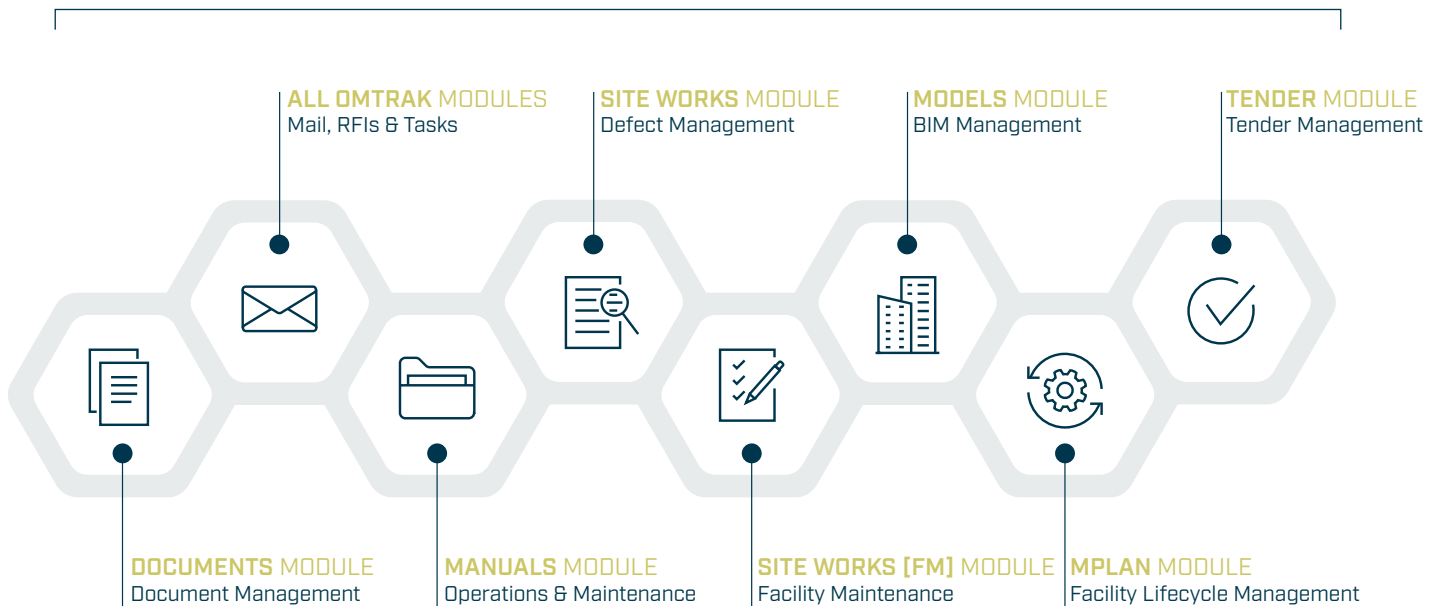
Looking Forward

As we progress through 2024, it remains vital for industry professionals to share insights and experiences related to compliance with the new regulations. Ongoing dialogue will strengthen the construction sector's approach to product information management.

At OmTrak, we understand the necessity of robust, organised documentation for construction projects. By prioritising comprehensive O&M Manuals, project teams can ensure that critical data is preserved throughout a facility's lifespan.

For further information on effectively capturing and retaining long-term product information, focus on comprehensive O&M documentation, which is essential for fostering a safe and informed building environment.

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1. https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/product-assurance-and-certification-schemes/building-product-information-requirements/
2. https://www.1news.co.nz/2019/10/03/rottenomics-author-says-leaky-buildings-saga-has-cost-new-zealand-47-billion/

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