HACKING AND DEMOLITION

Do you need approval for wall hacking in Singapore?

By DirectHome Editorial Updated 24 November 2026 9 min read Explore our hacking and demolition service ↗

Not from the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) if the wall carries only its own weight. A structural wall needs a Professional Engineer, an approved structural plan and a permit first. In a condo, your management corporation may also have a say.

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Before you book a wall hacking contractor, here's who decides what. This page covers condos and landed houses. Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats are out of scope, because HDB issues the permits for renovation work in HDB units.

Who has a say over the wall you want gone

Who comes in when you remove a wall in a condo or landed house. The MCST row applies to condos only.

Who	A wall carrying only its own weight	A structural wall
A Professional Engineer	We recommend one checks the wall first; a condo estate may ask for an engineer's endorsement	The only one who can apply for structural plan approval, in the civil or structural discipline
The Commissioner of Building Control, the BCA official who approves building plans	No plans to submit	Approves the structural plan, and a permit is needed before work starts
Your management corporation (MCST), in a condo	Might need to approve it, as your by-laws set out	Its permission, because structural elements are common property
You	Apply for any approval your condo estate needs	Apply for the permit jointly with the Qualified Person (a registered architect or Professional Engineer) and the builder, and for any estate approval

A structural wall needs an engineer, an approved plan and a permit

The Building Control Act lists structural walls and load-bearing walls among a building's structural elements, the parts that resist forces and moments. It leaves non-load bearing walls out.

In any building, BCA's structural plan page says only a Professional Engineer in the civil or structural discipline can apply for the plan approval, and that once the plan is approved, a permit is required before the structural works can start.

For condos, BCA's condo owner page adds that structural elements such as slabs, beams, columns and walls can't be altered without proper assessment by a Professional Engineer, and that approval from the Commissioner of Building Control is also required.

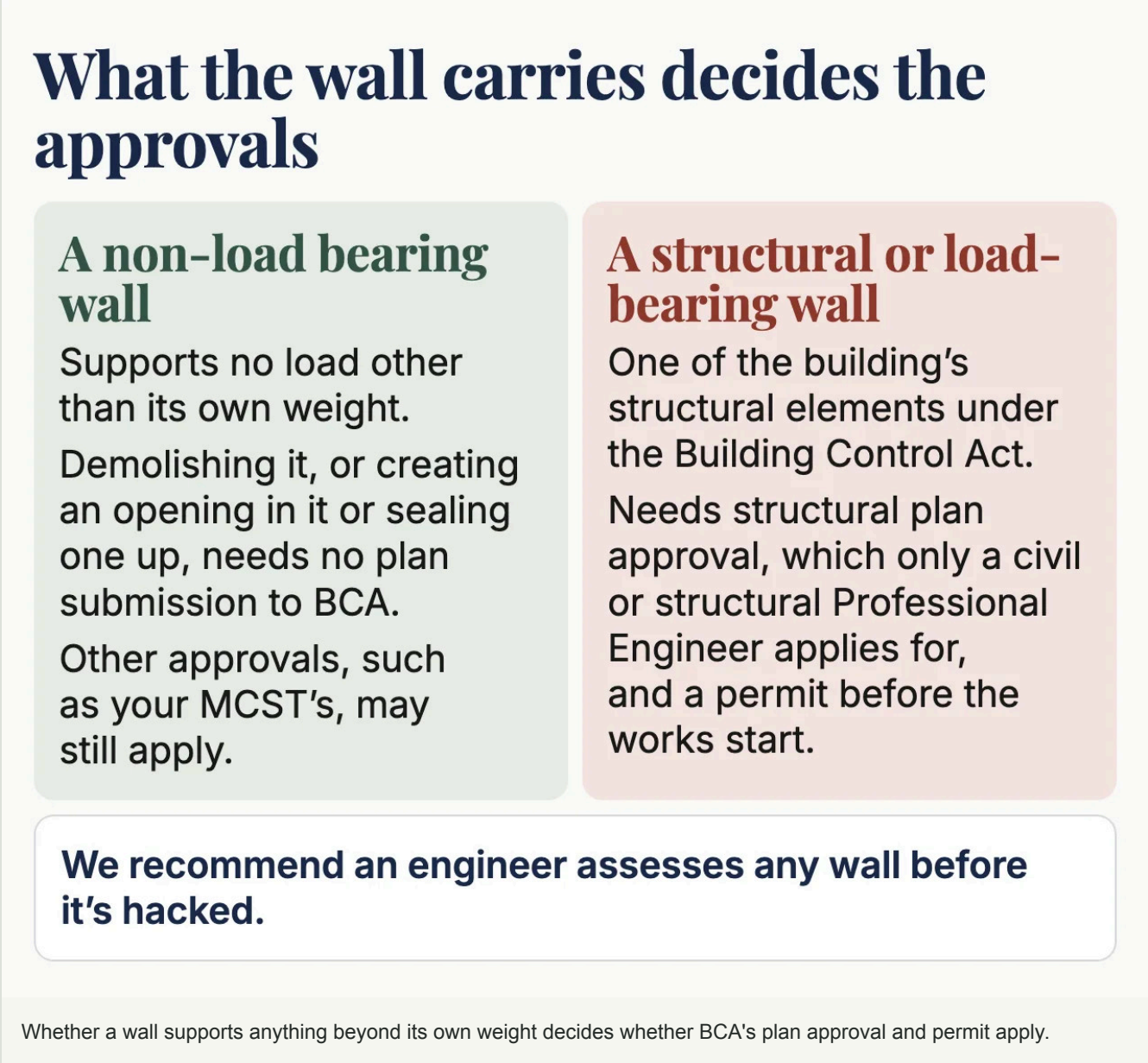
We recommend you have an engineer assess any wall before it's hacked. The exemption below only applies to a wall that supports nothing but itself, and that's for the engineer and the approved plans to settle, not the contractor.

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A wall that carries only its own weight



Whether a wall supports anything beyond its own weight decides whether BCA's plan approval and permit apply.

The Building Control Regulations list the insignificant building works that need no plan submission to BCA. For walls, the list includes work for the demolition, restoration or reinstatement of any non-load bearing wall, and for creating an opening in a non-load bearing wall or sealing up any wall opening.

The Regulations define a non-load bearing wall as one that supports no load other than its own weight. A doorway cut into a partition can be on the list, while the same doorway in a structural wall is structural work.

Putting a new wall up

Putting up or altering a partition up to 10 metres high is a separate item. In a bungalow, semi-detached, terrace or linked house, that's provided any non-laminated glass in it sits no more than 2.4 metres above the floor. In any other building, such as a condo, it's provided the partition is made of lightweight material, such as plasterboard, gypsum board, or hollow or autoclaved aerated concrete blocks.

What the list doesn't excuse you from

No plans to BCA doesn't mean no approvals. BCA's page on works not requiring approval says you must still obtain the required approvals from other relevant authorities, and it counts MCST by-laws among the other laws you must observe. It also says to consult your Qualified Person when in doubt about the clearances.

In a condo, your MCST comes in on top of BCA

BCA says building works in condominiums might require your MCST's approval, and its condo owner page says to check renovation restrictions with the developer or the MCST, and your Sale and Purchase Agreement, before carrying out any work.

A structural wall isn't yours alone. BCA's strata guide quotes the strata law, now the Building (Strata Management) Act 2004, which makes any structural element of the building common property, a load-bearing wall included. The guide says you can't alter common property without the MCST's permission.

Your estate can set conditions too. BCA's guide on works in a unit says the MCST may make by-laws requiring its approval before you carry out works, and those requirements may include an engineer's endorsement on structural works.

Even a wall that isn't structural may need an engineer. In a 2014 advisory to management corporations, BCA advised that before approving demolition of non-structural elements other than floor tiles, estates ensure the plans are endorsed by a civil or structural Professional Engineer certifying no structural works are involved. That's advice to estates, so yours may or may not ask for it.

Our article on MCST approval for condo renovation covers what else your estate decides.

In a landed house, a wall can be part of additions and alterations

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) says planning permission isn't required to enlarge the existing rooms in your terrace, semi-detached or detached house, or to change the position of rooms if that doesn't change the primary residential use. That's planning only, and BCA's rules for a structural wall still apply.

Taking out a structural wall can count as additions and alterations (A&A) work, which our A&A works service takes on. For a detached house, URA's A&A criteria, last updated 7 June 2026, include that structural changes such as new columns or beams shall not exceed 50% of the existing building, and a proposal that doesn't meet every criterion is treated as reconstruction. If the wall is part of a bigger change, our article on replanning, extending or rebuilding for an extra bedroom compares the routes.

Take care with a party wall, the wall your house shares with your neighbour's. URA and BCA's guide for landed estates, which describes itself as advisory, says that generally there should be no hacking of the existing party wall to create a recess to embed new walls, columns or beams. It also advises establishing whether URA planning permission or a BCA plan submission is needed, engaging a Qualified Person to advise and assist you, and telling your neighbours your plans.

How you find out what a wall is

Start from the approved plans and an engineer's inspection. In BCA's sample certificate for renovation plans, the Professional Engineer states they have personally checked the approved structural plan and inspected the structural condition of the building or unit, before certifying that no structural element will be altered or demolished.

In a condo, ask the management office first, because BCA's 2014 advisory said estates should keep a full set of approved structural plans that could be made available to you for planning your renovation. For a condo or landed house, you can buy copies of the approved plans through BCA's Plan Purchase Application Form.

Who applies for what, and what we give you

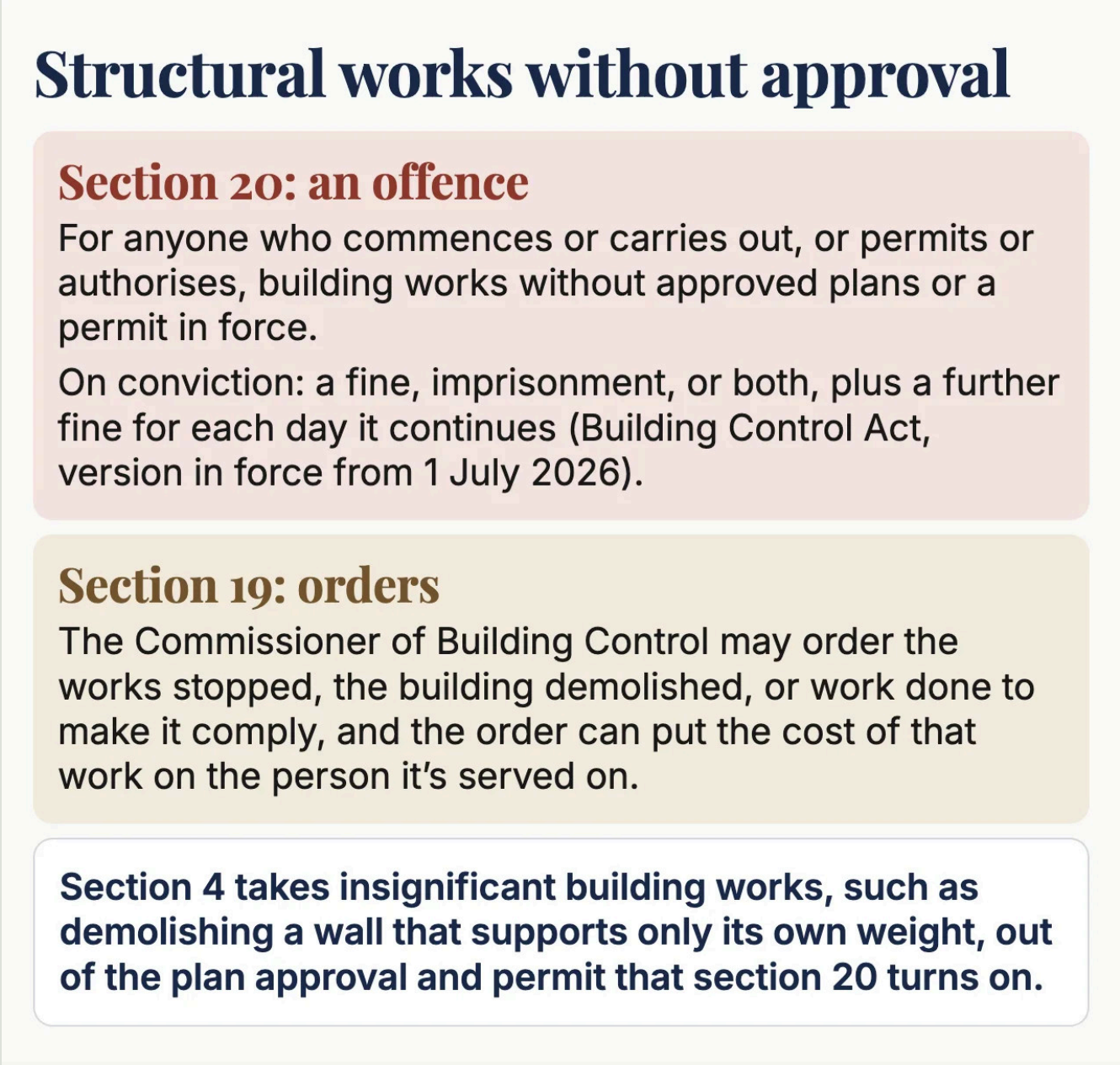
For a structural wall, BCA needs two things before the works start: the structural plan approval, which only the engineer applies for, and a permit. BCA says the permit can be applied for together with the plan application or after the plan is approved, and the application is made jointly by the developer, the Qualified Person and the builder who'll carry out the works.

The Building Control Act defines the developer as the person for whom, or on whose behalf, the works are carried out, so on your own home, that's you. The Act names the builder who applies as a licensed general builder or licensed specialist builder, so the structural works are done by a licensed builder.

In a condo, your estate's approval is yours to apply for, and when we do the work, we give you the scope and the details its form asks about. Our specialist does the hacking. Where a wall may be structural, we arrange the Professional Engineer, while the assessment and the structural plan application are the engineer's.

Our hacking buying guide gives BCA's processing times and what drives the cost of the hacking itself.

What happens if a structural wall is hacked without approval



Sections 20, 19 and 4 of the Building Control Act on works done without approved plans or a permit.

It's an offence, and not only for whoever does the hacking. Section 20 of the Building Control Act covers any person who commences or carries out, **or permits or authorises** the commencement or carrying out of, building works whose plans haven't been approved or deemed approved by the

Commissioner of Building Control, or that have no permit in force. That reaches you if you told a contractor to go ahead.

On conviction, the Act, in its version in force from 1 July 2026, sets a fine not exceeding $200,000, imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, or both, plus up to $1,000 for each day the contravention continues.

Under section 19, the Commissioner may also order the works stopped, the building demolished, or work done to make it comply, and the order can put the cost of that work on the person it's served on.

The plan approval and permit that section 20 turns on aren't needed for insignificant building works, which section 4 takes out of that part of the Act. That's why what the wall carries decides whether you need the plan approval and permit at all.

What to settle before work starts

What to have settled before any wall is hacked

- ☐ Which walls come out or get an opening, marked on the approved plans
- ☐ An engineer's assessment of each wall, and an endorsement if your estate asks for one
- ☐ For a structural wall, the approved structural plan and the permit
- ☐ In a condo, any approval your MCST requires, which is yours to apply for, and its renovation guidelines
- ☐ In a landed house, whether URA planning permission or a BCA plan submission is needed, and a word with your neighbours

Use this blank checklist to record your project review.

Tell us which walls you'd like opened up and send the plans if you have them. We'll do a free site assessment, flag any wall that may be structural so the engineer can assess it, and give you a fixed-price quote within 3 to 5 working days of the visit, never from photos.

Common questions

I've bought a resale home and a wall is already gone. What now?

Compare the home as built with its approved plans, which BCA says is how you can identify unauthorised building works on your property. To keep unauthorised works, BCA says you should engage a Qualified Person to act on your behalf and submit plans of them to the Commissioner of Building Control for approval, and the Qualified Person also obtains the other approvals needed, such as URA's.

Can I remove a wall as soon as I collect the keys to a new home?

Only once you know what the wall carries. BCA says you may go ahead with minor additions and alterations to a new property if they're insignificant building works, which for a wall means one that supports nothing but itself, and that's for an engineer and the approved plans to settle. In a condo, your MCST may also need to approve the work. If you go ahead without the approvals the work needs, BCA says the issue of your Certificate of Statutory Completion can be delayed.

Need help with your project?

Tell us what you need on WhatsApp and send a few photos. We'll arrange a free site assessment, then give you a fixed-price quote within 3 to 5 working days.

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Our service

Hacking and Demolition for your home

Explore the service, then discuss what your home needs with our team.

View service details ↗

Still weighing your options?

Plan with the buying guide

Bring the choices, costs and questions together before deciding what to do next.

Read the hacking and demolition buying guide →

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