

General GE-06 | Classification of buildings used for farming

Audience

The audience/s for this Practice Note include/s:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architects / Designers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Owner Builders |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Builders | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbers |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building Surveyors / Inspectors | <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate management agents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineers | <input type="checkbox"/> Trades and Maintenance (inc. Electricians) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Owners / Residential Tenants | |

Purpose

This Practice Note provides clarity on the classification of buildings used for farming.

The content below provides guidance on:

- Building classifications
- Farm building or farm shed concessions
- Council exemptions

Abbreviations & Definitions

The definitions and acronyms set out below are for guidance only. They are not intended to vary those set out in the Building Act 1993, the Building Regulations 2018 or the National Construction Code.

- **Act** – Building Act 1993
- **DtS** – Deemed-to-Satisfy provision of the NCC sets the minimum design and or construction requirements for a building or building work
- **Farm building** - A Class 7 or 8 building located on land primarily used for farming that is used in connection with farming; or used primarily to store one or more farm vehicles and in which the total number of persons accommodated at any time does not exceed one person per 200 m² of floor area or part thereof, up to a maximum of 8 persons; and with a total floor area of not more than 3500 m².
- **Farming** – Includes cultivating, propagating, and harvesting plants or fungi or their products or parts, including seeds, spores, bulbs or the like, but does not include forestry; or maintaining animals in any physical environment for the purposes of breeding them; or selling them; or acquiring and selling their bodily produce such as milk, wool, eggs or the like. It does not include forestry or maintaining animals for sport or recreational purposes.



- **Farm shed** - A Class 7 or 8 building located on land primarily used for farming that is used in connection with farming; or used primarily to store one or more farm vehicles and in which the total number of persons accommodated at any time does not exceed one person per 200 m² of floor area or part thereof, up to a maximum of 8 persons; and with a total floor area of not more than 3500 m².
- **NCC** – National Construction Code 2022
- **RBS** – Relevant Building Surveyor
- **Regulations** – Building Regulations 2018

Building classifications

Buildings used for farming are often diverse in nature, occupancy, use and size. They are either a NCC Class 10 (non-habitable shed), Class 7 (storage-type) or a Class 8 (process-type) building and identifying the correct classification is dependent on the purpose for which they are designed, constructed or adapted to be used.

The explanatory information contained within Part A6 of the NCC provides further information on classification and where there is any doubt, the RBS must classify the building as the class it most closely resembles in accordance with regulation 13.

Class 10 - Non-habitable building

A Class 10a building is a non-habitable building which would not be appropriately classified as a Class 7 or Class 8 building. For example, a Class 10a building could be used for farming to store materials and equipment such as a tractor and tools and animal fodder.

Class 7 – Storage-type building

A Class 7b building is a storage type building used for the storage or display of goods or produce for sale by wholesale. Whilst a Class 10a and Class 7b can be used for storage, a Class 7b would be used to display or storage of goods or produce from the farming activities. For example, a Class 7b may be a building whereby farmed goods or produce to be sold are stored ready to be loaded for transport.

It may be difficult to determine if a storage building is a Class 10a or Class 7b building and consideration must be given to the building's size, what is primarily being stored, what work is being carried out in the building and potential hazards such as racking, highly stacked pallets and fire load.

Class 8 – Process-type building

A Class 8 building is a type of building that is used for the production, assembling, packing, or cleaning of goods or produce. This would include a building that accommodates machinery or people to process, clean, sort or pack goods or produce for sale.

Farm building or farm shed concessions

For example, if people are likely to be employed to stack materials/produce in a storage building or remove materials/produce from a storage building then a classification of Class 7b may be appropriate. Depending upon whether the criteria in the definition of farm shed or farm building have been met, the associated DtS provisions and concessions of NCC Volume One Part I3 may apply. Part I3 of the NCC provides building concessions for farm buildings and farm sheds and these concessions are attributed to the fact that the occupants of the farm buildings and farm sheds are not exposed to the same level of risk as the occupants of buildings of the same classification that are not used for farming. In general, farm sheds are considered to present a lesser hazard than farm buildings.



However, identification of low fire load, low occupant risk and low risk of fire spread must not be used as justification for choosing a less stringent building classification for a building under DtS. For example, if the intended use of a building is to grow or store a large amount of tomatoes, such as a large greenhouse, and there is likely to be only one to two persons in the building at any time, it is considered inappropriate to classify the building as a Class 10a under the DtS provisions and a classification of Class 7 or Class 8 would be more appropriate.

Council exemptions

Regulation 280 allows the relevant council to exempt a Class 10 building to be constructed on farm land and used for farming purposes from all or any of the requirements of the Regulations.

If the relevant council grants an exemption from all the Regulations, a building permit and certificate of final inspection are not required for the building.

This exemption may be requested by the farm owner to the relevant council who will decide whether to give an exemption on a case-by-case basis.

Related Documentation

- Building Act 1993
- Building Regulations 2018

List of Amendments

- Changes to reference the new NCC version
- Minor amendments for clarification and improve readability
- Update format and content review

Document history

Sector	Building
Category	General
Topic	Classification of building used for farming
Document number	06
Version	2.0
Superseded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Version 1.0, published 19 April 2022, supersedes Practice Note 67 Application of the Building Codes of Australia to Farm Buildings issued June 2018.
Published	24 April 2023

Contact Us

If you have a technical enquiry, please email technicalenquiry@vba.vic.gov.au or call 1300 815 127.

Victorian Building Authority

Goods Shed North
733 Bourke Street
Docklands VIC 3008

www.vba.vic.gov.au



Copyright

© April 2023 Victorian Building Authority (VBA).

This Practice Note has been prepared and published by the VBA for general educational and information purposes only. This publication must not be copied, reproduced, published, adapted, or communicated by any person without the VBA's prior written consent or as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). The VBA makes no warranties or representations whatsoever about the accuracy, reliability, suitability, completeness or authenticity of any information or material contained in this resource. Any use or reliance on such information is at a person's own risk. The VBA accepts no liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect, or consequential loss or damage any person may suffer arising out of or in connection with the access or use of this resource (including any third-party material included in this resource).

SUPERSEDED
30 April 2024