

## Building Practice Note GE-06: Classification of buildings used for farming

This Practice Note provides guidance on correctly classifying farm buildings and applying concessions.

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 2019.

- **Act** – Building Act 1993
- **DtS** – Deemed-to-Satisfy
- **Farming** – cultivating, propagating or harvesting plants or fungi, or breeding or acquiring animal produce to sell; but does not include forestry or maintaining animals for sport or recreational purposes
- **Farm building** - a building limited to accommodating not more one person per 200m<sup>2</sup> of floor area or part thereof, up to a maximum of 8 persons, where the floor area of the building must not exceed 3500m<sup>2</sup>
- **Farm shed** - a building that is limited to accommodating no more than 2 people at any time, where the floor area must be greater than 500m<sup>2</sup> but less than 2000m<sup>2</sup>
- **NCC** – National Construction Code 2019 Volume One
- **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 Class 10a, Class 7 or a Class 8 building depending on the size, purpose, operations and whether the building is a workplace for contractors or employees.

Building classifications are determined by the purpose for which the building is designed, constructed or adapted to be used. The explanatory information contained within Part A6 of the NCC provides further information on the classification process.



Regulation 13 states that, where there is any doubt, the RBS must classify the building as the class it most closely resembles.

### Class 10a - 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, hand tools and animal fodder.

### Class 7b – Storage 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. Consideration needs to be given to the building's size, what is primarily being stored, what work is being carried in the building and hazards such as highly stacked pallets and fuel loads.

### Class 8 – Process 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

Part H3 of the NCC provides concessions for farm buildings and farm sheds, whereby relaxation of certain requirements in the DtS Provisions of the NCC is allowed. 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.

The size of the building and level of occupancy are the two criteria that differentiate between a farm building and a farm shed. Commonly, both must be used in connection with farming or primarily to store farm vehicles.

It should be noted that the definition of a farm building and farm shed does not influence the building's classification as they may be both either a Class 7 or 8 building.

## 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, generally on a case-by-case basis.



## Related Documentation

- Building Act 1993
- Building Regulations 2018

## Contact Us

If you have a technical enquiry, please email [technicalenquiry@vba.vic.gov.au](mailto:technicalenquiry@vba.vic.gov.au) or call 1300 815 127.

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## Version History

- Version 1.0, published 19 April 2022, supersedes Practice Note 67 Application of the Building Codes of Australia to Farm Buildings issued June 2018.

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