

## Building Practice Note DE-02: Demolition Work - Regulation 26

This Practice Note provides guidance on documentation required for application for a building permit under regulation 26 of the Building Regulations 2018 (the Regulations) and practitioners registration required to carry out demolition work.

The context below provides guidance on:

- What is demolition work?
- Who can undertake demolition work?
- Building permit application requirements for demolition work



The person undertaking demolition work must have the necessary knowledge, experience, equipment and storage to properly conduct the demolition operations and must have the appropriate registration for the type and scope of that demolition work.

### Abbreviations & Definitions

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

- **Act** – Building Act 1993
- **AS** – Australian Standard
- **BCA** – Building Code of Australia
- **Building work** – work for or in connection with the construction, demolition, or removal of a building
- **Regulations** – Building Regulations 2018
- **RBS** – Relevant Building Surveyor
- **Section** – of the Building Act 1993
- **Standard** – AS 2601-2001 The demolition of structures

### What is demolition work?

Demolition work is building work that often combines structural demolition, such as removal of load bearing elements, and the removal of internal fixtures, fittings, services, and non-load bearing elements. Demolition work can also involve the complete or partial dismantling of buildings and other structures and if carried out inappropriately, it can cause damage to adjoining property, and expose workers and the public to significant risk of injury or death.

To avoid damage to properties and tragic injuries, all necessary preventative measures must be in place. This means that demolition work must be completed by persons who have the necessary knowledge, experience and whose registration allows them to carry out the demolition.

## Who can undertake demolition work?

The building practitioner engaged in undertaking demolition work must be appropriately registered, have the capacity to carry out, manage or arrange the work in a competent manner and to a professional standard.

To undertake this work, a building practitioner must be registered in one of the following demolition categories:

### Demolisher – Low rise

Persons registered in this class are responsible for managing, arranging, and carrying out:

- the complete or part dismantling of buildings and other structures (other than special buildings) up to two storeys in height and
- the demolition and stripping of internal fittings, fixtures, services, and non-load bearing elements of unoccupied buildings up to two storeys in height.

### Demolisher – medium rise

Persons registered in this class are responsible for managing, arranging, and carrying out:

- the complete or part dismantling of buildings and other structures (other than special buildings) up to five storeys in height and
- the demolition and stripping of internal fittings, fixtures, services, and non-load bearing elements of unoccupied buildings up to five storeys in height.

### Demolisher – unlimited

Persons registered in this class are responsible for managing, arranging, and carrying out of:

- the complete or part dismantling of all buildings and structures, including special buildings and
- the demolition and stripping of internal fittings, fixtures, services and non-load bearing elements of all buildings and structures, including special buildings.

### Domestic builder – unlimited

Persons registered in this class are responsible for work associated with the construction, renovation, improvement, or maintenance of a home (including class 1, 2, and 4 buildings, and associated class 10 buildings, as classified in the BCA).

Domestic builders who do not have the required registration to allow them to demolish an entire building are not permitted to undertake demolition work unless the RBS, at their discretion approves partial demolition based on the extent and scope of the work involved.

### Owner Builders

Owner builders will often contemplate undertaking their own demolition work, including the removal of walls, roofs, structures, or buildings. However due to the inherent and significant risk to life and property, Owner builders are not allowed to undertake demolition work for the following reasons:

- generally, they are not a registered building practitioner in the appropriate category or class having regard to section 169EA
- they may never have undertaken that work before and will not have a competent understanding of the construction elements or demolition procedures
- they are not in the business of demolition and will have inadequate experience and knowledge
- they will not have the required equipment and insurances such as general public liability (to cover third party injuries, compensation and property damage) or professional indemnity.

For insurance requirements for demolishers refer to Ministerial Order - Building practitioners' Part B.

Additionally, Owner builders cannot perform demolition of subfloor work and are not permitted to work on the relocation of a home, which would include stumping or subfloor work. However, completion of work to an already relocated home where the subfloor work has been completed is acceptable.

### Building permit application

Regulation 26 outlines the information that is required to accompany an application for a building permit to demolish or remove a building. This includes –

- Any planning permit relating to the building work
- Any report and consent issued by the responsible authority, such as report and consent under section 29A
- Description and outline of the building or part of the building to be demolished or removed
- Allotment plan showing the location of the building, setbacks, adjoining buildings, streets, footpaths, and the like
- Where only part of a building is proposed to be demolished, computations or other information is required to show that the remainder of the building will remain structurally stable
- Information showing the position and description of hoardings, allotment boundaries, barricades, temporary crossings, protective awnings, and outriggers
- Written description of the proposed demolition or removal procedure
- Evidence that the demolisher has the necessary knowledge, experience, equipment, and storage facilities to properly conduct the demolition operations
- Any other documents that the RBS reasonably requires.

### Responsibilities of the RBS

The RBS must not issue a building permit for the demolition or removal of a building under Division 3 of the Building Act unless the person nominated as a builder on the application for a building permit is a registered building practitioner in the appropriate category or class having regard to section 169(2A).

When assessing an application for a building permit, the RBS must:

- Ensure that adequate documentation has been lodged in accordance with regulation 26
- Be satisfied the proposed demolition work complies with the Act and the Regulations
- Inspect and approve the proposed precautions prior to commencement of the demolition work
- Ensure precautions related to public safety are adequate and in place under Reg 116.

In addition, the RBS must also ensure the precautions under Regulation 117 are taken before and during demolition in accordance with AS 2601-2001 (the Standard) and:

- The demolition must not be commenced until the precautionary measures have been inspected and approved by the RBS
  - No part of any external wall on or within 3 m of a street alignment may be pulled down except during the hours that the RBS directs
  - Protective outriggers must be installed where necessary to guard against danger to life or property or when required by the relevant building surveyor
- The site must be cleared of all debris.

The RBS may exempt minor demolition work from all or parts of the measures set out in regulation 117 if the RBS determines that the proposed demolition work does not warrant those measures.

In considering whether to grant an exemption where a partial demolition is proposed, the RBS must pay due regard to the potential for any remaining part of the building to become structurally unstable after the demolition or partial building removal is completed.

## Responsibilities of the Builder for demolition work

Regulation 117 requires in part that the building practitioner (demolisher) takes precautions in accordance with the Standard before and during demolition. Compliance with the Standard reduces the risk of injury and property damage in a workplace safety setting.

It is recommended that demolishers observe Part 2 of the Standard. This Part sets out a procedure to inspect the site and structure prior to work commencing to identify potential hazards on the site and in the structure. It then requires the preparation of a work plan. The work plan requires (in part) documentation of any precautions to be implemented and a description of the demolition procedure.

This document does not only provide valuable information to workers on the site in terms of identifying where hazards are and what precautions are required to mitigate the risk of those hazards, it can also be used to satisfy that part of regulation 26 which requires a written description of the demolition procedure to be lodged with the application for a building permit.

In summary to mitigate site risks, demolishers must —

- Not commence building demolition work until the building permit has been issued by the RBS
- Implement precautionary measures in accordance with regulations 116, 117 and the Standard
- Not commence the demolition work until the precautions have been inspected and approved by the RBS; and
- Review the progress of demolition and take further precautions during the demolition as it may be necessary.



Minister's Guideline 09 – Issuing of Building Permits (Demolitions/Removal) and the Owner Builder, provides that the RBS must have regard to this Guideline when considering an application for a building permit for demolition work where the owner is nominated as the builder.

## Related Documentation

- Ministerial Order - Building practitioners' insurance (Victoria Government Gazette S19 17/01/2020):
- Minister's Guideline 09
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
- Public Safety and Amenity - A Code of Good Practice at Construction sites:  
<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/code-practice-building-construction.pdf>
- Worksafe Victoria: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

## 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.

### Victorian Building Authority

Goods Shed North  
733 Bourke Street  
Docklands VIC 3008

[www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au)

## Version History

- Version 1.0, published 28 June 2021

## Copyright

© June 2021 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).