

BCA BUILDING CLASSES

This edition of Onboard reviews the different classes of buildings as defined by the Building Code of Australia



In Australia, the classification of each building or structure is set out by Volume 1, Section A3.2 of the Building Code of Australia (BCA). There are 10 different classes and the classification is determined by the purpose for which the building or structure is used.

The class of building is important as it will determine requirements such as:

1. Acoustic requirements between individual occupancy units, different classes of buildings and surrounding parts of the building.
2. Fire performance requirements with regards to:
 - The building and other neighbouring buildings.
 - Separation of internal spaces within the building.
 - Separation between different classes within the same building.
 - Fire escape.
3. Energy efficiency requirements for walls, roofs, floors and services.

A building can be made up of different classes if it has various uses, a good example being residential apartments over a shopping centre. This will mean that certain requirements will differ across the building according to building class.

More information

The publication of the BCA is split into 2 volumes.

Volume 1 sets out building code requirements for Class 2 to 9 buildings which are primarily viewed as commercial and medium to high rise residential buildings.

Volume 2 sets out building code requirements for residential buildings and cover Class 1 and 10 buildings.

For more detailed information please refer to ABC.gov.au.

Table 1. Building classes as per BCA Volume 1 Section A3.2

BUILDING CLASS	DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING CLASS	
CLASS 1	One or more buildings constituting	
	Class 1A	A single dwelling or detached house . One or more attached dwellings (side by side only) separated by a fire resistant wall such as terrace houses, town houses or villas.
	Class 1B	Boarding/guest house or hostel not exceeding 300 m ² total floor area, and where not more than 12 people reside, which is not located above or below another dwelling or another class of building other than a private garage.
CLASS 2	A building containing two or more sole occupancy units each being a separate dwelling, either one above the other or side by side over a common area (for example a carpark or sub-floor area).	
CLASS 3	A residential building, other than a Class 1 or 2, which is a common place of long term or transient living for a number of unrelated persons, such as a hostel or a hotel.	
CLASS 4	A dwelling, such as a caretaker's flat, in a building that is Class 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 if it is the only dwelling in the building.	
CLASS 5	An office building used for professional or commercial purposes, excluding buildings of class 6, 7, 8 or 9.	
CLASS 6	A shop or other building for the sale of goods by retail or the supply of services direct to the public.	
CLASS 7	Class 7A	A building which is a carpark.
	Class 7B	A building which is for storage, such as a warehouse, or for display of goods or produce for sale by wholesale.
CLASS 8	A laboratory or a factory. A building in which a handicraft or process for the production, assembling, altering, repairing, packing, finishing, or cleaning of goods or produce is carried on for trade, sale or gain.	
CLASS 9	A building of a public nature.	
	Class 9A	A health care building.
	Class 9B	An assembly building, including a trade workshop or laboratory in a primary or secondary school but excluding any other parts of the building that are of another class.
	Class 9C	An aged care building.
CLASS 10	A non habitable building or structure.	
	Class 10A	A non-habitable building such as a private garage, carport, shed or the like.
	Class 10B	A non-habitable structure being a fence, mast, antenna, retaining or free standing wall, swimming pool or the like.

For more information on classification and specific performance requirements for each building classification to the BCA.

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