

Building Note 111

Classification of buildings containing vulnerable occupants

Purpose

This Building Note provides information about the classification of residential buildings accommodating unrelated people who may require some level of supported care. These could be persons with a disability, children, the elderly or other vulnerable groups. These buildings may be known as specialist disability accommodation or SDA.

These considerations apply to new and existing buildings, or parts of buildings used to provide supported care living arrangements and must be read in conjunction with the National Construction Code (NCC).

National Construction Code building classifications

The NCC groups buildings into different classifications based on their intended use. The class of a building, in part, determines the fire safety measures to be provided for a building.

Consideration needs to be given to the number and type of occupants and accommodation provided by the building. In this context, there are a number of options:

- Class 1b – one or more residential buildings providing independent living by unrelated people; such as a hostel, boarding house or the like. This building or buildings have a total floor area less than 300m² and usually has less than 12 people residing in it.
- Class 3 – a place of long term or transient living for a number of unrelated people including accommodation for the aged, children, or people with a disability, a residential part of a health-care building which accommodates members of staff, a residential part of a detention centre, school, hotel or motel and a residential care building.
- Class 9a – a health-care building where occupants need physical assistance to evacuate in the case of an emergency.

Key considerations

Where a building is to be constructed or modified to house unrelated aged persons, vulnerable children or people with a disability the following should be considered when determining the appropriate classification to be applied to this building:

- The number of occupants to be accommodated in the building including carers;
- The total floor area of the building;
- The nature of vulnerability (such as mental, physical, child, aged etc);
- The extent of care provided (eg full or part time care, onsite);
- Whether occupants can independently evacuate the building if required.

Further information

Contact Building Advisory Services for further information:

- Email: bas@nt.gov.au
- Phone: 08 8999 8985



Mark Meldrum
Director Building Control
1 April 2022