

## BUILDING ADVISORY SERVICES – FACT SHEET

# When is a shed not a shed?

In Building Control Areas in the Northern Territory the *Building Act* requires buildings and structures to meet minimum structural, health, safety and amenity standards. These standards are defined in the Building Code of Australia which are applied nationally.

Through a system of private certification the building certifier ensures that buildings meet the minimum standards through the issue of building and occupancy permits.

### What is a shed?

The Building Code refers to sheds as Class 10a (non-habitable) buildings. Examples of Class 10a buildings are private garages, carports, garden sheds, farm sheds and the like. As the intent is predominantly for storage purposes these buildings have minimal requirements in terms of structural, health, safety and amenity standards. This is why they are not suitable for habitable purposes.

### What is a house?

The Building Code refers to houses as Class 1a – single detached dwellings. The intended use of these buildings is for people to live in and the Building Code accordingly provides for higher requirements in terms of structural, health, safety and amenity standards when compared to Class 10a buildings.

### How do standards differ between sheds and houses?

The standards can differ with respect to:

- Weatherproofing
- Natural light
- Fire protection
- Structural wind design (cyclone coding)
- Ceiling heights
- Moisture barrier
- Energy efficiency
- Sanitary facilities (kitchen, laundry, bathrooms)
- Slab height
- Ventilation
- Smoke alarms
- Requirements in flood prone areas

### Appearance and form

The *Building Act* and Building Code do not regulate the appearance of a house or shed. This remains a matter of personal choice.

## Building certification

If you are thinking of building a shed, house or other structure in a building control area you must engage the services of a private building certifier. The building certifier will need to know what the use of the building will be (residence, garage, shed etc) and will ensure that the building you require is designed appropriately for its intended use by referring to the requirements in the Building Code.

On completion of the building works the certifier will issue you with an occupancy permit. This is a statement that the building:

- has been designed/constructed in accordance with the declared use and appropriate codes; and
- the building may be used in accordance with the approved use.

The occupancy permit should clearly state the Building Code classification of the building (e.g. Class 1a, Class 10a etc).

## Want to change the use?

If you wish to change the use of a shed or garage to a house you will need to speak to your building certifier. The certifier will:

- assist you to determine what additional works are required to convert a shed/garage to a house;
- issue you a building permit which allows you to convert the building; and
- on completion of the building works issue you an occupancy permit which allows you to occupy and use the building as a house.

## More information?

If you require more information either contact Building Advisory Services (see below for details) or a registered building certifier (visit [www.nt.gov.au/building](http://www.nt.gov.au/building) or look up Building Certification Services in the Yellow Pages index).

To see if you live in a building control area visit [www.nt.gov.au/building](http://www.nt.gov.au/building).

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