



# Fact Sheet – Building Change-in-use

## Introduction

The Building Works Manual (BWM) describes policies and procedures that are mandatory for all new building work, in particular the requirement for compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC) series. The BWM also contains requirements for Defence building certification of building work.

The BWM and associated guides and templates can be found at the [Building Works Section](#) page of the Defence Estate Quality Management System (DEQMS) website.

This fact sheet describes the compliance requirements that must be assessed and addressed for any building on the Defence Estate that undergoes a change in-use as defined in the BWM.

## Aim

The aim of this fact sheet is to provide guidance on the requirements associated with a change-in-use as defined in the BWM.

## References

Reference is necessary to the following documents:

- a. Building Works Manual – Edition 1 (BWM);
- b. National Construction Code (NCC) including Building Code of Australia (BCA) – Volumes One and Two, and Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA) Volume Three; and
- c. Manual of Fire Protection Engineering (MFPE).

## Change-in-use

A change-in-use is defined in the BWM as:

- a. an increase in Contribution Factor (CF) in a building from CF3, CF4 or CF5 to CF1 or CF2, or
- b. A change in building occupancy classification.

Note. A change in building occupancy classification occurs when:

- there is a change that results in greater than 10% of the floor area of a storey being used for a different class than its current use – eg new storage (class 7b) areas in an office (class 5) storey being greater than 10% of that storey.
- there is a new laboratory (class 8) in a building of another classification.



- there is a new residential sole-occupancy unit (class 2, 3 or 4) in a building of another classification.

### **Compliance requirements**

It is the Defence requirement to comply with the NCC. The NCC defines occupancy classifications which can be assigned to any building. The NCC occupancy classification is used to determine resultant measures to meet the performance requirements of the NCC.

In addition, all Defence buildings are required to have their Contribution Factor (CF) identified. Buildings with a CF1 or CF2 have additional asset protection requirements as detailed in the Defence policies – eg. the MFPE.

Where a building undergoes a change-in-use – as defined above – it must be upgraded as per the requirements of the BWM and MFPE. These rules vary depending on whether the change-in-use is related to a NCC occupancy classification change – and the percentage of the change in relation to the area of the building – or they relate to an increase in Contribution Factor. Paragraphs 2.25, 2.26 and 5.10 of the BWM are summarised as:

Paragraph 2.25 – requires that if that change is greater than 50% of the floor area within a 3 year period – and a substantial alteration is triggered as per that definition – then the entire building must be upgraded to comply with the current NCC and MFPE.

Paragraph 2.21 – requires any portion of a building that has an NCC occupancy classification change to be upgraded to comply with the current NCC. the new building works shall not reduce the safety within the remainder of the building or adjacent buildings and the existing or adjacent buildings shall not adversely impact safety of the new building work.

Paragraph 5.10 – Where the use, function or contents of an existing building changes and results in an increase in CF or aircraft capability level – ie from CF3, CF4 or CF5 to CF1 or CF2 – without a change to the building's NCC occupancy classification – then the entire building shall be upgraded to comply with the current Defence policy eg. the MFPE. This requirement does not also mean that NCC compliance is needed.

### **Conclusion**

The compliance requirements in the BWM must be assessed and addressed as a result of any proposed change-in-use to ensure that the requirements of the BWM and other Defence policies are met.