



Technical Memo:

Farm Buildings

There has been some confusion regarding Farm Buildings. The BC Building Code 2006 states *Farm Buildings shall conform to the requirements in the National Farm Building Code of Canada 1995*. The National Farm Building Code includes certain design relaxations for buildings that meet certain criteria.

RATIONALE: Farm buildings must comply with the BC Building Code unless specifically exempted under the Farm Building Code. Generally, the exemptions only apply to farm buildings with **low human occupancy of not more than one person for every 40 m²**. The rationale for having special requirements for farm buildings, as distinct from other buildings, is based on the low human occupancy load, the remote location of typical farm structures, or the special nature of the occupancies involved. The Farm Building Code provides certain structural exemptions for low human occupancy buildings. However dwelling units located on a farm are required to conform to the BC Building Code and the provisions of the Farm Building Code would not apply.

DEFINITION: The above mentioned Codes define a farm building as *a building or part thereof which does not contain a residential occupancy and which is associated with and located on land devoted to the practice of farming, and used essentially for the housing of equipment or livestock, or the production, storage, or processing of agricultural and horticultural produce or feeds*.

OCCUPANCY: Farm buildings include but are not limited to produce storage and packing facilities, livestock and poultry housing, milking centres, manure storage facilities, grain bins, silos, feed preparation centers, farm workshops, greenhouses, farm retail centres, and horse riding exercise and training facilities. Farm buildings may be classed as low or high human occupancy, depending on the normal human occupant load. **They must be classed as low human occupancy to qualify for the Farm Building Code provisions.**

EXAMPLES: Farm buildings likely to be classed as low human occupancy are livestock and poultry housing, manure and machinery storage facilities, and horse exercise and training facilities where no bleachers or viewing areas are provided.

Farm buildings likely to be classed as “other than low human occupancy” (i.e. high human occupancy) include farm retail centres for feeds, horticultural and livestock produce, auction barns, and show areas where bleachers or other public facilities are provided. Farm work centres where the number of workers frequently exceeds the limit for low human occupancy will also be in this category. It is possible to have areas of both high and low human occupancy in the same building provided that the structural safety and fire separation requirements for high human occupancy are met in the part thus designated.

This Technical Memo is provided to customers acknowledging that trusses have been ordered for classification as a farm building with low human occupancy of not more than one person for every 40 m². This information is intended to provide guidance only and local Authorities Having Jurisdiction should be consulted prior to construction.

Ref: BCBC 2006, NFC 1995