

FACT SHEET

WORKER ACCOMMODATION

This fact sheet provides guidance for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) who provide accommodation to workers as part of the job.

If PCBUs provide accommodation they own, manage or control to their workers (where occupancy is necessary for work purposes because other accommodation is not reasonably available), they must, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain the accommodation. It must be maintained so that workers are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the accommodation¹.

This applies to all industries.

The following interim general guidance is based on previous guidance about farm worker accommodation².

BUILDINGS

Caravans and tents aren't suitable accommodation.

Accommodation should be soundly built from weatherproof materials. New buildings must comply with the Building Act 2004.

It should:

- > be located away from stock yards and other similar areas
- > have gutters and downpipes to carry rainwater away from the building
- > have lined and finished interior walls (timber-framed buildings)
- > have stopped and battened joins in wall linings
- > have paper, paint or varnish on wall surfaces
- > have suitable thermal insulation
- > have draught-proof floors with smooth, easily cleanable surfaces. If the floor is concrete, it should be covered with material such as sheet vinyl flooring
- > have ventilation openings in foundation walls that are covered with mesh or screened to keep out vermin
- > not have machinery and chemicals stored nearby.

¹ Sections 36(4) and (5) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

² WorkSafe's Good Practice Guide *Managing health and safety: A guide for farmers* June 2014.

FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Adequate facilities and amenities should be provided. Accommodation should be kept clean and hygienic.

FACILITIES/AMENITIES	GUIDANCE
Bedrooms	<p>Bedrooms should have the following minimum dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > For one person: 6 m² of floor space, 2.4 m high in any part, 1.8 m wide in any part. > For two people: 9 m² of floor space, 2.4 m high in any part, 2.1 m wide in any part. > For more than two people: 9 m² for the first two people and 4.5 m² for every extra person – 2.4 m high in any part, 2.1 m wide in any part. <p>Bedrooms should be furnished with suitable beds and mattresses, and cupboards or wardrobes for hanging up clothes.</p>
Cooking facilities	<p>The cookhouse should be big enough to prepare food in. The cookhouse and dining room can be in the same room.</p> <p>The cookhouse should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > at least 1.5 m clear floor space on the working side of the cooking stove and sink bench > suitable cooking equipment, utensils and appliances > hot water at the sink > ventilation – as a guide, the window space should be at least equal to one tenth of the floor area, and at least half of the windows should open > enough cupboard space for storing non-perishable food, utensils and equipment. <p>The cookhouse shouldn't be used as a bedroom.</p>
Dining facilities	<p>Dining rooms should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > room for workers to eat their meals in reasonable comfort – as a guide, the dining room should allow at least 1.1 m² of floor space for each person > tables and enough seating for all workers at one sitting – benches with backs are acceptable, but don't attach them to the floor, as this makes it harder to clean > equipment, utensils and appliances for dining. <p>The dining room shouldn't be used as a bedroom.</p>
Washing facilities	<p>There should be hand basins with hot and cold water.</p> <p>There should be baths or showers. Each shower should have an attached dressing area. Each compartment (shower and dressing area) should have a floor area of at least 1 m².</p> <p>If there are not separate facilities for females, doors should be lockable.</p>
Laundry facilities	<p>There should be a washing machine for laundering clothes.</p>
Sanitary conveniences	<p>There should be a flushing toilet if practicable. Installed toilets should meet the standards in the Building Act 2004 and codes.</p> <p>If a flushing toilet is not practicable, there should at least be an outhouse that is properly maintained.</p>

FACILITIES/AMENITIES	GUIDANCE
Sick areas/rooms	If practicable, there should be an area set aside where workers can rest if they feel unwell. If this isn't practicable, make other arrangements, such as sending them home.
Water	There should be safe drinking water. There should be enough hot water for showers, baths, washing hands, washing clothes and cooking.
Lighting and ventilation	All rooms should have natural and artificial lighting. Artificial lighting should provide a reasonable illumination (a minimum of 75 lux). The window areas should be at least equal to one-tenth the floor area. Half the windows should be open. If possible, cross-ventilate rooms.
Heating	There should be heating in at least one room – electric, gas, open fire, coal range or space heater (and fuel).
Refrigeration	There should be a refrigerator and freezer.
Rubbish disposal	There should be bins with tight-fitting lids for storing rubbish. Rubbish shouldn't be stored near accommodation. Rubbish should be disposed of so it doesn't become a health hazard.
Smoke alarms	There should be working smoke alarms.

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