

Site coverage, floor area and landscaped area requirements for complying development

This information sheet explains the requirements and development standards for site coverage, floor area and landscaped area for residential complying development. These manage the density and scale of residential development as complying development.

Important note

This information sheet is for guidance only and may not contain all the information relevant to every property in NSW. Applicants should refer to the [relevant planning controls](#)¹ before beginning work, or seek professional advice on how the planning controls apply to their property.

The majority of the development that can be done as exempt or complying development in NSW is identified in the State wide exempt and complying development policy (the policy). View the policy at the [Exempt and Complying Development Policy website](#)².

Exempt development is minor building work that does not need planning or building approval. [Information sheet 1.1](#)³ provides more information about exempt development.

Complying development is a joint planning and construction approval that can be granted by council or a private certifier. [Information sheet 1.2](#)⁴ provides more information about complying development.

Note: As identified in Information Sheets 1.1 and 1.2 exempt and complying development cannot be carried out on certain land.

Site coverage requirements in the General Housing Code and Rural Housing Code

Site coverage is the proportion of a site that is covered by buildings and structures. Managing the total site coverage of dwelling houses and ancillary development stops residential sites from becoming too overdeveloped. It also ensures adequate space is provided for deep soil landscaping and private open space.

For the purposes of the policy, site coverage includes the dwelling house and any of the following ancillary development, (that is not exempt development):

- awnings,
- basements,
- detached studios,
- driveways,
- outbuildings,
- swimming pools, and
- any enclosed or unenclosed balconies, decks, patios, pergolas, terraces, verandahs, carports and garages that are attached to the dwelling house.

The eaves of a building are not included in the calculations for site coverage for the purposes of the policy.

¹ <https://maps.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/Terms>

² www.planning.nsw.gov.au/exemptandcomplying

³ www.planning.nsw.gov.au/exemptandcomplyingoverview

⁴ www.planning.nsw.gov.au/exemptandcomplyingoverview

The percentage of a site that can be covered varies depending on the size of a lot as follows:

Table 1: Total site coverage allowed by lot size

Lot size	Site coverage allowance
200m ² to <250m ²	65% of lot size
250m ² to <300m ²	60% of lot size
300m ² to <450m ²	55% of lot size
450m ² to <900m ²	50% of lot size
900m ² to <1500m ²	40% of lot size
1500m ² or more	30% of lot size

> = greater than

< = less than

Floor area

Floor area controls the size of dwelling houses and outbuildings to ensure that they are an appropriate size for the lot.

Floor area for residential development under the policy has its own definition which is different to *gross floor area* as defined in the Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan.

The floor area measurement is designed to capture usable areas within a building and as a result does not include:

- stairways, eaves, external awnings (including blinds and canopies), lift shafts and void areas.

The floor area of a dwelling house is calculated from the outside face of the external walls (including any attached garage) at a height of 1.4m above existing ground level.

Habitable areas

The policy contains a floor area allowance for all habitable areas that may be built as complying development.

These include a dwelling house, any associated basement, detached studio or a secondary dwelling*, and are limited to the following amounts:

Table 2: Total allowable habitable floor area by lot size

Lot size	Floor area allowance
200m ² to 250m ²	90% of lot size
>250m ² to 300m ²	85% of lot size
>300m ² to 450m ²	270m ²
>450m ² to 600m ²	330m ²
>600m ² to 900m ²	380m ²
More than 900m ²	430m ²

> = greater than

< = less than

* secondary dwellings can be built as complying development under the State policy for affordable rental housing, [SEPP \(Affordable Rental Housing\) 2009](#)⁵

Outbuildings

Ancillary outbuildings are detached from the dwelling house and enable other parts of the site to be utilised for common uses such as garages, sheds or decks. The maximum floor area for an outbuilding is as follows:

Table 3: Allowable floor area of an outbuilding by lot size

Lot size	Floor area allowance
300m ² or less	36m ²
>300m ² to 600m ²	45m ²
>600m ² to 900m ²	60m ²
More than 900m ²	100m ²

> = greater than

< = less than

Landscaped requirement

Landscaped area ensures that elements of the natural environment are retained when residential development takes place. These areas do not include any paved or sealed surface, and vegetation in the form of grass, trees or other plants which must be able to grow in these areas.

Depending on the lot size a specific amount of the lot must also be landscaped as follows:

⁵ www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

Table 4: Minimum required total landscaped area by lot size

Lot size	% required for landscaping
200m ² to 300m ²	10% of lot size
>300m ² to 450m ²	15% of lot size
>450m ² to 600m ²	20% of lot size
>600m ² to 900m ²	30% of lot size
>900m ² to 1500m ²	40% of lot size
More than 1500m ²	35% of lot size

> = greater than

< = less than

At least 50% of the landscaped area must be behind the building line to the primary road and all landscaped areas must have a dimension of at least 1.5m in width.

Areas on a lot that are forward of the building line must be landscaped to the following amounts:

- 50%, if the lot has a width of more than 18m, or
- 25%, if the lot has a width of not more than 18m.

Exceptions

If the proposed development is an addition or extension to a dwelling house that will not increase the overall site coverage of development or decrease the existing landscaped area, then the landscaped requirements do not apply to that development.

What else do I need to consider?

- If you propose to remove or prune any existing trees or vegetation, you should contact your council first to make sure you don't need approval for this.
- Any structures that would be located on public land, or on or over a public road (including temporary structures), require separate approval from the relevant council, or Roads and Maritime Services under the *Roads Act 1993* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

If your proposal doesn't meet the required standards for either exempt or complying

development, you may still be able to do the work, but you must get development approval first. In this case, you should contact your local council to discuss your options.

Further Information

For more information visit the [Exempt and Complying Development Policy website](#)⁶ or contact the Department's Exempt and Complying Development Team on 1300 305 695 or by [email](#)⁷.

Electronic Housing Code

The Electronic Housing Code website helps applicants determine whether the proposed development qualifies as exempt or complying development and the standards that must be met.

Applications for complying development can also be lodged and tracked online for those council areas which are using the Electronic Housing Code. Visit the [Electronic Housing Code website](#)⁸ to find out if it is used by your local council or for more details.

⁶ www.planning.nsw.gov.au/exemptandcomplying

⁷ codes@planning.nsw.gov.au

⁸ www.electronichousingcode.com.au/