

Imported Modular & Container Homes

What you need to know before you buy, transport or install one

THE SHORT VERSION

An imported modular or container-style home is not automatically compliant just because it is advertised as 'Australian compliant' or 'Council ready'. Before it can be approved, you will need evidence that its structure, materials, electrical, plumbing, gas, glazing, fire safety, energy efficiency and other systems meet all Australian Standard requirements.

YOUR ASSESSMENT IN 5 SIMPLE STEPS

1	2	3	4	5
Ask first	Check the design	Check the systems	Get the evidence	Apply before work
Get the compliance documents before you buy.	Confirm the building suits the site and climate.	Electrical, plumbing and gas need Australian compliance.	Engineering, certificates, testing and reports may be required.	Obtain the required Shire approvals before transport or installation.

What is the problem with imported buildings?

Imported modular homes can arrive in Australia substantially or completely fitted out overseas. That can be convenient, however, components designed for another country may not meet Australian requirements. Retrofitting or replacing non-compliant components can be expensive.

STRUCTURE	SERVICES	MATERIALS
NCC + Australian Standards Wind, cyclone, loads and site conditions must be addressed.	Australian trades & standards Electrical, plumbing and gas systems need Australian compliance.	Evidence matters Australian standard compliant glazing, insulation, cladding, fixtures, paint, fittings, fire and hazardous-material requirements must be demonstrated.

Ask the question

- Can the supplier provide Australian compliance certificates, structural engineering certification, and test reports for the building and its components? Where testing has been undertaken, was it performed by an appropriately accredited testing facility?
- Have the electrical, plumbing and/or gas systems been installed overseas? If so, have they been inspected, tested and/or certified by appropriately licensed Australian tradespersons?
- Has the building been designed for another country's climate, wind loads, fire requirements or construction standards? If so, can the supplier demonstrate that the building has been assessed for the Australian site and relevant Australian requirements?

BEFORE YOU PAY A DEPOSIT!

Ask the supplier for the complete compliance package first. If the evidence is missing, assume additional assessment, testing, replacement or re-certification may be required.

The red flags

The main areas that need to be checked

1 Electrical — AS/NZS 3000

Pre-wired imported buildings may contain cabling, circuit breakers, fittings or other electrical components that are not suitable for Australian requirements. There exists the potential risk that systems may need substantial rewiring before legal connection to the grid.

RED FLAG

No Australian electrical documentation, or no inspection and certification by a licensed Australian electrician.

2 Plumbing & drainage — AS/NZS 3500

- Non-compliant pipes or fittings.
- Brass fittings with potentially excessive lead content.
- Waste and venting arrangements that do not comply with Australian plumbing and local health/drainage requirements.
- Pre-installed plumbing that requires substantial alteration before sign-off.

RED FLAG

Imported plumbing systems may use pipes, fittings, fixtures and drainage arrangements that are not suitable for Australian requirements. Materials and fittings may also have different certification or water-quality requirements.

3 Gas — AS/NZS 5601

Gas appliances must have the required Australian certification and gas installations must be carried out by appropriately licensed trades. Foreign approvals alone may not be sufficient.

RED FLAG

Missing certification labels, foreign-only approvals or gas systems that have not been assessed by an Australian licensed gas fitter.

4 Structure & building materials

- Steel frames may not satisfy Australian wind, site or cyclonic loading requirements.
- Insulation may not achieve the required thermal performance or may contain prohibited materials.
- Wall panels and cladding may have fire-performance issues, particularly where composite panels are used.
- Glazing must satisfy the applicable safety and installation requirements. Australian standard compliance evidence will be required.

RED FLAG

Imported buildings may have been designed around the structural loads, climate and construction practices of their country of origin. The fact that a building has a steel frame does not, by itself, demonstrate compliance with Australian structural requirements.

5 Asbestos & hazardous materials

Australia banned asbestos in new building materials from December 2003. Fibre cement cladding, vinyl flooring/adhesives and insulation are all materials that may warrant investigation where their origin or composition is uncertain.

RED FLAG

Unknown suppliers, missing material documentation or suspicious products may require independent laboratory testing.

Compliance checklist

The evidence you should expect to see and absolutely ask for

Building & structural

- ☐ NCC/BCA compliance documentation for the proposed building.
- ☐ Engineering certification from an Australian-registered structural engineer.
- ☐ Site-specific structural design addressing wind, soil, loads and other site conditions.
- ☐ Evidence that the steel frame and structural components are suitable for the intended Australian location.
- ☐ Structural information for transport, lifting and installation where applicable.

Electrical, plumbing & gas

- ☐ Electrical documentation demonstrating compliance with AS/NZS 3000.
- ☐ Inspection and certification by a licensed Australian electrician.
- ☐ Plumbing documentation demonstrating compliance with AS/NZS 3500.
- ☐ Inspection/certification by a licensed Australian plumber.
- ☐ Australian-certified gas appliances and compliant AS/NZS 5601 installations, where gas is provided.
- ☐ Inspection/certification by a licensed Australian gas fitter, where applicable.

Building envelope, fire & energy

- ☐ Glazing documentation, including compliance with AS 1288 and applicable wind/impact requirements.
- ☐ Evidence of required safety glazing and thermal performance.
- ☐ Insulation and wall-panel information, including fire-performance evidence.
- ☐ NCC energy-efficiency documentation appropriate to the building and climate zone.
- ☐ Waterproofing/weatherproofing information for roofs, windows, doors and junctions.
- ☐ Termite-management documentation where required.

Safety & site-specific issues

- ☐ Smoke alarm compliance.
- ☐ Natural and mechanical ventilation compliance.
- ☐ Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) compliant materials/construction where applicable.
- ☐ Asbestos/hazardous-material investigation where product origin or composition is uncertain.
- ☐ Transport and lifting certification where required.

IMPORTANT

The Shire may request additional information, testing, certification or professional reports where the documents supplied do not demonstrate compliance for the proposed building and site.

Before it arrives

What to check before you transport or install an imported building

Ask the supplier these questions

DOCUMENTS - Can you provide the complete Australian compliance package? - Who designed and certified the structure? - Where are the engineering reports and test certificates? - Can you provide product certificates for glazing, insulation, cladding and other critical components?	AUSTRALIAN SERVICES - Who will inspect the electrical installation? - Who will certify the plumbing and drainage? - Who will certify any gas installation? - What components will need to be replaced or modified?
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The Shire approval process

1 Before purchase Check the site and proposed building with the Shire.	2 Before transport Provide the required plans, engineering and compliance evidence.	3 Assessment The Shire assesses the application and may request more information.	4 Approval Obtain the required planning/building approvals and permits.	5 Install Transport, place and complete the building in accordance with the approvals.
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CLAIMS OF 'AUSTRALIAN COMPLIANT' OR 'COUNCIL READY' DOES NOT MEAN APPROVED OR APPROVABLE

A marketing statement is not a Certificate of Design Compliance, engineering certification, electrical certificate, plumbing certificate, gas certificate or Building Permit. Ask for the actual evidence. Complete your due diligence.

Common additional work that may be required

- Rewiring or replacement of electrical components.
- Replacement or alteration of plumbing, drainage or gas components.
- Independent structural engineering and certification.
- Replacement of glazing, cladding, insulation, waterproofing or other non-compliant building products.
- Independent testing of suspect or undocumented materials.
- Additional fire, energy-efficiency, waterproofing, termite or bushfire assessment.
- Transport/lifting engineering where the building has not been designed or certified for the proposed handling.

Need more help?

For Building and Planning Approval and/or application questions, please contact the Shire's Development Services Team.

Shire of Denmark • (08) 9848 0300 • info@denmark.wa.gov.au

GUIDE ONLY

This information sheet is general guidance and is not a certification of any product or manufacturer. It is based on the potential compliance issues identified for imported modular/container homes. Each building must be assessed on its own documentation, design, materials, site and intended use. Independent professional advice and certification may be required.