

3.2 BUILDING BYE-LAWS

Building bye-laws are legal regulations set by local authorities or development agencies to control building construction and development. They are part of urban planning frameworks that ensure buildings are safe, hygienic, environmentally sustainable, and in harmony with their surroundings.

Purpose of Building Bye-Laws

1. Ensure **safety** (structural, fire, environmental)
2. Promote **orderly development** in urban/rural areas
3. Maintain **public health and sanitation**
4. Protect **natural light, ventilation, and privacy**
5. Control **density, building height, and land use**

Key Components of Building Bye-Laws

1. Land Use Zoning

- Every plot is designated for a specific use:
 - **Residential**
 - **Commercial**
 - **Industrial**
 - **Institutional**
 - **Mixed-use**
- Construction must comply with permitted use.

2. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) / Floor Space Index (FSI)

- **FAR = Total built-up area ÷ Plot area**
- Controls density and intensity of development.
- Varies by city zone, plot size, and road width.

3. Setbacks

- Minimum open spaces to be left around the building.
- Ensure light, ventilation, and fire access.
- Typically includes:
 - **Front setback**
 - **Rear setback**
 - **Side setbacks** (one or both)

4. Building Height

- Max height is determined by:
 - Width of front road
 - Plot size and use
 - Flight path restrictions (near airports)
 - Fire safety requirements (e.g., elevators, sprinklers)

5. Coverage & Open Space

- **Plot coverage** = Percentage of land that can be built upon.

- The rest must be open for light, air, landscaping, parking, etc.
- Example: Max 65% coverage in residential zones.

6. Basements

- Allowed for parking, storage, or services—not habitable use.
- Must meet waterproofing, ventilation, and fire norms.

7. Staircases & Elevators

- **Min. stair width:** ~1.2 m in public buildings
- High-rise buildings (usually >15 m) must have:
 - Fire escape staircases
 - Fire lifts
 - Pressurized shafts

8. Parking Norms

- Based on built-up area or use:
 - Residential: 1 car/100 sq.m.
 - Commercial: 1 car/75 sq.m.
- Must include accessible parking spaces.

9. Barrier-Free Access (Universal Design)

- Ramps (1:12 slope), elevators, tactile indicators, handrails
- Accessible toilets
- Required in public and large buildings

10. Fire Safety Provisions

- Fire exits, extinguishers, alarms, sprinklers, fire-rated materials
- Buildings >15 m: mandatory fire clearance

11. Lighting and Ventilation

- Every habitable room must have:
 - Natural light (min window area = 10% of floor area)
 - Natural ventilation (min 5%)

12. Sanitation Requirements

- Minimum number of toilets/washrooms per occupant or room
- Rules for septic tanks, sewer connections, water supply

13. Green Building Norms (where applicable)

- Rainwater harvesting
- Solar water heaters
- Waste segregation and composting
- Minimum tree planting

Authority That Issues Bye-Laws

- **Municipal Corporations / Municipal Councils**
- **Urban Development Authorities** (e.g., DDA, BDA, HMDA)
- **State Town Planning Departments**

Example Documents:

- **NBC 2016 (India)** – National Building Code
- **UDPFI Guidelines** – Urban Development Planning Framework

Documents Required for Approval (General)

Document	Purpose
Site Plan with setbacks	Shows compliance with layout rules
Floor Plans, Elevations, Sections	Architectural and spatial details
Title deed / ownership proof	Confirms legal possession of plot
Structural drawings	For structural safety clearance
Soil test report	For foundation design
NOCs (fire, environment, etc.)	Mandatory for certain building types

Violation Consequences

Type of Violation	Possible Action
Illegal construction	Demolition, fines, or sealing
Excess FAR or no setback	Stop work notices, rejection of completion
No occupancy certificate	Cannot legally occupy or sell the building