

USE & OCCUPANCY

Occupancy (Definition)

Classification of building use based on the fire safety and relative hazard involved.

- Factors:**
- Number of People
 - Assembly Areas
 - Capability for Self-Preservation
 - Hazardous Materials

SECTION 303 ASSEMBLY GROUP A

303.1 Assembly Group A.

Assembly Group A occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for the gathering of persons for purposes such as civic, social or religious functions; recreation, food or drink consumption; or awaiting transportation or motion picture and television production studio sound stages, approved production facilities and production locations.

Exceptions:

1. A building or tenant space used for assembly purposes with an occupant load of less than 50 persons shall be classified as a Group B occupancy.
2. A room or space used for assembly purposes with an occupant load of less than 50 persons and accessory to another occupancy shall be classified as a Group B occupancy or as part of that occupancy.
3. A room or space used for assembly purposes that is less than 750 square feet (70 m²) in area and is accessory to another occupancy shall be classified as a Group B occupancy or as part of that occupancy.

Assembly occupancies shall include the following:

A-1 Assembly uses, usually with fixed seating, intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts or motion picture including, but not limited to:

Motion picture and television production studio sound stages, approved production facilities and production locations (with live audiences).

Motion picture theaters

Symphony and concert halls

Television and radio studios admitting an audience

Theaters

A-2 Assembly uses intended for food and/or drink consumption including, but not limited to:

Banquet halls

Night clubs

Restaurants

Taverns and bars

A-3 Assembly uses intended for worship, recreation or amusement and other assembly uses not classified elsewhere in Group A including, but not limited to:

Amusement arcades

Art galleries

Bowling alleys

Places of religious worship

Community halls

Courtrooms

Dance halls (not including food or drink consumption)

Exhibition halls

Funeral parlors

Gymnasiums (without spectator seating)

Indoor swimming pools (without spectator seating)

Indoor tennis courts (without spectator seating)

Lecture halls

Libraries

Museums

Waiting areas in transportation terminals

Pool and billiard parlors

A-4 Assembly uses intended for viewing of indoor sporting events and activities with spectator seating including, but not limited to:

Arenas

Skating rinks

Swimming pools

Tennis courts

A-5 Assembly uses intended for participation in or viewing outdoor activities including, but not limited to:

Amusement park structures

Bleachers

Grandstands

Stadiums

303.2 Fixed guideway transit systems. [SFM]

Fixed guideway transit system buildings shall conform to the requirements of this code for their occupancy classification in addition to the provisions set forth in Section 433.

303.3 Subterranean spaces for winery facilities in natural or manmade caves. [SFM]

For fire and life safety requirements, see [Section 436](#).

SECTION 304 BUSINESS GROUP B

304.1 Business Group B.

Business Group B occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for office, professional or service-type transactions, including storage of records and accounts. Business occupancies shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Airport traffic control towers

Animal hospitals, kennels and pounds

Banks

Barber and beauty shops

Car wash

Civic administration

Clinic-outpatient [SFM] (not classified as Group I-2.1)

Dry cleaning and laundries: pick-up and delivery stations and self-service

Educational occupancies for students above the 12th grade

Electronic data processing

Laboratories: testing, research and [SFM] instruction

Motor vehicle showrooms

Post offices

Print shops

Professional services (architects, attorneys, dentists, physicians, engineers, etc.)

Radio and television stations

Telephone exchanges

Training and skill development not within a school or academic program

SECTION 305 EDUCATIONAL GROUP E

305.1 Educational Group E.

Educational Group E occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, by more than six persons at any one time for educational purposes through the 12th grade. Religious educational rooms and religious auditoriums, which are accessory to places of religious worship in accordance with Section 508.3.1 and have occupant loads of less than 100, shall be classified as A-3 occupancies.

Exception: [SFM] A residence used as a home school for the children who normally reside at the residence. Such residences shall remain classified as Group R-2 or Group R-3 occupancies.

305.2 Day care.

The use of a building or structure, or portion thereof, for educational, supervision or personal care services for more than six children older than 2½ years of age, shall be classified as a Group E occupancy.

Exception: [SFM] A day-care facility not otherwise classified as an R-3 occupancy, where occupants are not capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from the staff, shall be classified as Group I-4.

SECTION 306 FACTORY GROUP F

306.1 Factory Industrial Group F.

Factory Industrial Group F occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for assembling, disassembling, fabricating, finishing, manufacturing, packaging, repair or processing operations that are not classified as a Group H hazardous or Group S storage occupancy.

306.2 Factory Industrial F-1 Moderate-hazard Occupancy.

Factory industrial uses which are not classified as Factory Industrial F-2 Low Hazard shall be classified as F-1 Moderate Hazard and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Aircraft

Appliances

Athletic equipment

Automobiles and other motor vehicles

Bakeries

Beverages; over 12-percent alcohol content

Bicycles

Boats

Brooms or brushes

Business machines

Cameras and photo equipment

Canvas or similar fabric

Carpets and rugs (includes cleaning)

Clothing

Construction and agricultural machinery

Disinfectants

Dry cleaning and dyeing

Electric generation plants

Electronics

Engines (including rebuilding)

Food processing

Furniture

Hemp products

Jute products

Laundries

Leather products

Machinery

Metals

Millwork (sash & door)

Motion picture and television production studio sound stages, approved production facilities and production locations (without live audiences) [SFM]

Musical instruments

Optical goods

Paper mills or products

Photographic film

Plastic products

Printing or publishing

Recreational vehicles

Refuse incineration

Shoes

Soaps and detergents

Textiles

Tobacco

Trailers

Upholstering

Wood; distillation

Woodworking (cabinet)

306.3 Factory Industrial F-2 Low-hazard occupancy.

Factory industrial uses that involve the fabrication or manufacturing of noncombustible materials which during finishing, packing or processing do not involve a significant fire

hazard shall be classified as F-2 occupancies and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Beverages; up to and including 12-percent alcohol content

Brick and masonry

Ceramic products

Foundries

Glass products

Gypsum

Ice

Metal products (fabrication and assembly)

306.4 Places of meat and poultry inspection. [ARG]

306.4.1 Meat and poultry processing plants. [ARG]

See [Section 1240](#).

306.4.2 Collection centers and facilities. [ARG]

See [Section 1241](#).

306.4.3 Renderers. [ARG]

See [Section 1242](#).

306.4.4 Horsemeat and pet food establishments. [ARG]

See [Section 1243](#).

SECTION 307 HIGH-HAZARD GROUP H

307.1 High-hazard Group H. [F]

High-hazard Group H occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, that involves the manufacturing, processing, generation or storage of materials that constitute a physical or health hazard in quantities in excess of those allowed in control areas constructed and located as required in Section 414. Hazardous uses are classified in Groups H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4 and H-5 and shall be in accordance with this section, the requirements of Section 415 and the California Fire Code.

Exceptions: The following shall not be classified in Group H, but shall be classified in the occupancy that they most nearly resemble:

1. Buildings and structures that contain not more than the maximum allowable quantities per control area of hazardous materials as shown in Tables 307.1(1) and 307.1(2), provided that such buildings are maintained in accordance with the *California Fire Code*.
2. Buildings utilizing control areas in accordance with [Section 414.2](#) that contain not more than the maximum allowable quantities per control area of hazardous materials as shown in Tables 307.1(1) and 307.1(2).
3. Buildings and structures occupied for the application of flammable finishes, provided that such buildings or areas conform to the requirements of [Section 416](#) and the *California Fire Code*.
4. Wholesale and retail sales and storage of flammable and combustible liquids in mercantile occupancies conforming to the *California Fire Code*.
5. Closed piping system containing flammable or combustible liquids or gases utilized for the operation of machinery or equipment.
6. Cleaning establishments that utilize combustible liquid solvents having a flash point of 140°F (60°C) or higher in closed systems employing equipment listed by an approved testing agency, provided that this occupancy is separated from all other areas of the building by 1-hour fire barriers or 1-hour horizontal assemblies or both.
7. Cleaning establishments that utilize a liquid solvent having a flash point at or above 200°F (93°C).
8. Liquor stores and distributors without bulk storage.
9. Refrigeration systems.
10. The storage or utilization of materials for agricultural purposes on the premises.
11. Stationary batteries utilized for facility emergency power, uninterrupted power supply or telecommunication facilities, provided that the batteries are provided with safety venting caps and ventilation is provided in accordance with the *California Mechanical Code*.
12. Corrosives shall not include personal or household products in their original packaging used in retail display or commonly used building materials.
13. Buildings and structures occupied for aerosol storage shall be classified as Group S-1, provided that such buildings conform to the requirements of the *California Fire Code*.
14. Display and storage of nonflammable solid and nonflammable or noncombustible liquid hazardous materials in quantities not exceeding the maximum allowable quantity per control area in Group M or S occupancies complying with [Section 414.2.5](#).
15. The storage of black powder, smokeless propellant and small arms primers in Groups M and R-3 and special industrial explosive devices in Groups B, F, M and S, provided such storage conforms to the quantity limits and requirements prescribed in the *California Fire Code*.
16. [SFM] Group L occupancies as defined in [Section 443.1](#).

SECTION 308 INSTITUTIONAL GROUP I

308.1 Institutional Group I.

Institutional Group I occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, in which people are cared for or live in a supervised environment, having physical limitations because of health or age are harbored for medical treatment or other care or treatment, or in which people are detained for penal or correctional purposes or in which the liberty of the occupants is restricted. Institutional occupancies shall be classified as Group I-1, I-2, I-3 or I-4. Restraint shall not be permitted in any building except in Group I-3 occupancies constructed for such use (see Section 308.4).

Where occupancies house both ambulatory and nonambulatory persons, the more restrictive requirements shall apply.

308.2 Group I-1.

This occupancy shall include buildings, structures or parts thereof housing clients, on a 24-hour basis, who because of age, mental disability or other reasons, live in a supervised residential environment that provides personal care services.

This occupancy may contain more than six nonambulatory and/or bedridden clients. (See Section 425, Special Provisions For Licensed 24-Hour Care Facilities in a Group I-1, R-3.1, or R-4 Occupancy). This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Assisted living facilities such as: Residential Care Facilities, Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE's), Adult Residential Facilities, Congregate Living Health facilities, Group homes, Residential Care Facilities for the Chronically Ill, and Congregate Living Health Facilities for the Terminally Ill.

Social rehabilitation facilities such as: Halfway houses, Community Correctional Centers, Community Correction Reentry Centers, Community Treatment Programs, Work Furlough Programs, and Alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities.

308.3 Group I-2.

This occupancy shall include buildings and structures used for medical, surgical, psychiatric, nursing or custodial care on a 24-hour basis for more than six persons who are classified as nonambulatory or bedridden. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Hospitals

Nursing homes (both intermediate care facilities and skilled nursing facilities)

Mental hospitals

Detoxification facilities

308.3.1 Child care facility.

A child care facility that provides care on a 24-hour basis to more than *six* children 2½ years of age or less shall be classified as Group I-2.

308.3.2 Group I-2.1 ambulatory care facility.

A healthcare facility that receives persons for outpatient medical care that may render the patient incapable of unassisted self-preservation and where each tenant space accommodates more than five such patients.

308.4 Group I-3.

This occupancy shall include buildings or portions of buildings and structures that are inhabited by one or more persons who are under restraint. An I-3 facility is occupied by persons who are restrained. This group shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Prisons

Jails

Reformatories

Detention centers

Correctional centers

Juvenile Halls

Buildings of Group I-3 shall be classified as one of the occupancy conditions indicated in Sections 308.4.1 through 308.4.5 (see Section 408.1).

308.4.1 Condition 1.

This occupancy condition shall include buildings in which free movement is allowed from sleeping areas, and other spaces where access or occupancy is permitted, to the exterior via means of egress without restraint. A Condition 1 facility is permitted to be constructed as Group R.

308.4.2 Condition 2.

This occupancy condition shall include buildings in which free movement is allowed from sleeping areas and any other occupied smoke compartment to one or more other smoke compartments. Egress to the exterior is impeded by locked exits.

308.4.3 Condition 3.

This occupancy condition shall include buildings in which free movement is allowed within individual smoke compartments, such as within a residential unit comprised of individual sleeping units and group activity spaces, where egress is impeded by remote-

controlled release of means of egress from such a smoke compartment to another smoke compartment.

308.4.4 Condition 4.

This occupancy condition shall include buildings in which free movement is restricted from an occupied space. Remote-controlled release is provided to permit movement from sleeping units, activity spaces and other occupied areas within the smoke compartment to other smoke compartments.

308.4.5 Condition 5.

This occupancy condition shall include buildings in which free movement is restricted from an occupied space. Staff-controlled manual release is provided to permit movement from sleeping units, activity spaces and other occupied areas within the smoke compartment to other smoke compartments.

308.5 Group I-4, day care facilities.

This group shall include buildings and structures occupied by persons of any age who receive custodial care for less than 24 hours by individuals other than parents or guardians, relatives by blood, marriage or adoption and in a place other than the home of the person cared for. A facility such as the above with six or fewer persons shall be classified as a Group R-3. Places of worship during religious functions are not included.

308.5.1 Adult care facility.

A facility that provides accommodations for less than 24 hours for more than six unrelated adults and provides supervision and personal care services shall be classified as Group I-4.

308.5.2 Child care facility.

A facility that provides supervision and personal care on less than a 24-hour basis for more than *six* children 2½ years of age or less shall be classified as Group I-4.

Exception: A child day care facility that provides care for more than *six* but no more than 100 children 2½ years or less of age, when the rooms where such children are cared for are located on the level of exit discharge and each of these child care rooms has an exit door directly to the exterior, shall be classified as Group E.

308.5.2.1 Special provisions.

See [Section 442.4](#) for daycares located above or below the first story.

SECTION 309 MERCANTILE GROUP M

309.1 Mercantile Group M.

Mercantile Group M occupancy includes, among others, buildings and structures or a portion thereof, for the display and sale of merchandise, and involves stocks of goods, wares or merchandise incidental to such purposes and accessible to the public. Mercantile occupancies shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Department stores

Drug stores

Markets

Motor fuel-dispensing facilities

Retail or wholesale stores

Sales rooms

309.2 Quantity of hazardous materials.

The aggregate quantity of nonflammable solid and nonflammable or noncombustible liquid hazardous materials stored or displayed in a single control area of a Group M occupancy shall not exceed the quantities in Table 414.2.5(1).

SECTION 310 RESIDENTIAL GROUP R

310.1 Residential Group R.

Residential Group R includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for sleeping purposes when not classified as an Institutional Group I. Residential occupancies shall include the following:

R-1 Residential occupancies containing sleeping units where the occupants are primarily transient in nature, including:

Boarding houses (transient)

Hotels (transient)

Motels (transient)

[HCD 1] Efficiency dwelling units (transient)

R-2 Residential occupancies containing sleeping units or more than two dwelling units where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature, including:

Apartment houses

Boarding houses (not transient)

Convents

Dormitories

Fraternalities and sororities

Hotels (nontransient)

Monasteries

Motels (nontransient)

Vacation timeshare properties

[HCD 1] Efficiency dwelling units (nontransient)

Congregate living facilities with 16 or fewer occupants are permitted to comply with the construction requirements for Group R-3.

R-3 Residential occupancies where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature and not classified as Group R-1, R-2, R-3.1, R-4 or I, including:

Buildings other than townhouses that do not contain more than two dwelling units.

Townhouses not more than three stories above grade in height with a separate means of egress.

Adult care facilities that provide accommodations for clients of any age for less than 24 hours. Licensing categories that may use this classification include, but are not limited to: Adult Day-care Facilities, Adult Day-support Center. [SFM]

Child care facilities that provide accommodations for clients of any age for less than 24 hours. Licensing categories that may use this classification include, but are not limited to: [SFM]

Family Day-care Homes, Day-care Center for Mildly Ill Children, Infant Care Center and School Age Child Day-care Center.

Congregate living facilities with 16 or fewer persons.

R-3.1. [SFM] This occupancy group may include facilities licensed by a governmental agency for a residentially based 24-hour care facility providing accommodations for six or fewer clients of any age. Clients may be classified as ambulatory, nonambulatory or bedridden. A Group R-3.1 occupancy shall meet the requirements for construction as defined for Group R-3, except as otherwise provided for in Section 425, Special Provisions For Licensed 24-Hour Care Facilities in a Group I-1, R-3.1 or R-4 Occupancy.

This group may include:

Adult Residential Facilities

Congregate Living Health Facilities

Foster Family Homes

Group Homes

Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled Habilitative

Intermediate Care Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled Nursing

Nurseries for the full-time care of children under the age of six, but not including “infants” as defined in Section 310

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly

Small Family Homes and Residential Care Facilities for the Chronically Ill

Exception: Group Homes licensed by the Department of Social Services which provide nonmedical board, room and care for six or fewer ambulatory children or children two years of age or younger, and which do not have any nonambulatory clients shall not be subject to regulations found in Section 425.

Pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 13143 with respect to these exempted facilities, no city, county, or public district shall adopt or enforce any requirement for the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire and panic unless the requirement would be applicable to a structure regardless of the special occupancy. Nothing shall restrict the application of state or local housing standards to such facilities if the standards are applicable to residential occupancies and are not based on the use of the structure as a facility for ambulatory children. For the purpose of this exception, “ambulatory children” does not include relatives of the licensee or the licensee's spouse.

R-4 Residential occupancies shall include buildings arranged for occupancy as residential care/assisted living facilities including more than six ambulatory clients, excluding staff.

Group R-4 occupancies shall meet the requirements for construction as defined for Group **R-3**, except as otherwise provided for in this code.

This occupancy classification may include a maximum six nonambulatory or bedridden clients (see Section 425, Special Provisions For Licensed 24-Hour Care Facilities in a Group I-1, R-3.1, or R-4 Occupancy). Group R-4 occupancies shall include the following:

Assisted living facilities such as: Residential care facilities, Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE's), Adult Residential Facilities, Congregate Living Health facilities, and Group homes.

Social rehabilitation facilities such as: Halfway houses, Community Correctional Centers, Community Correction Reentry Centers, Community Treatment Programs, Work Furlough Programs, and Alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities.

310.3 Large-family day care homes. See Section 445.

SECTION 311 STORAGE GROUP S

311.1 Storage Group S.

Storage Group S occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for storage that is not classified as a hazardous occupancy.

311.2 Moderate-hazard storage, Group S-1.

Buildings occupied for storage uses that are not classified as Group S-2, including, but not limited to, storage of the following:

Aerosols, Levels 2 and 3

Aircraft repair hangar

Bags: cloth, burlap and paper

Bamboos and rattan

Baskets

Belting: canvas and leather

Books and paper in rolls or packs

Boots and shoes

Buttons, including cloth covered, pearl or bone

Cardboard and cardboard boxes

Clothing, woolen wearing apparel

Cordage

Dry boat storage (indoor)

Furniture

Furs

Glues, mucilage, pastes and size

Grains

Horns and combs, other than celluloid

Leather

Linoleum

Lumber

Motor vehicle repair garages complying with the maximum allowable quantities of hazardous materials listed in Table 307.1(1) (see Section 406.6)

Photo engravings

Resilient flooring

Silks

Soaps

Sugar

Tires, bulk storage of

Tobacco, cigars, cigarettes and snuff

Upholstery and mattresses

Wax candles

311.3 Low-hazard storage, Group S-2.

Includes, among others, buildings used for the storage of noncombustible materials such as products on wood pallets or in paper cartons with or without single thickness divisions;

or in paper wrappings. Such products are permitted to have a negligible amount of plastic trim, such as knobs, handles or film wrapping. Storage uses shall include, but not be limited to, storage of the following:

Aircraft hangar

Asbestos

Beverages up to and including 12-percent alcohol in metal, glass or ceramic containers

Cement in bags

Chalk and crayons

Dairy products in nonwaxed coated paper containers

Dry cell batteries

Electrical coils

Electrical motors

Empty cans

Food products

Foods in noncombustible containers

Fresh fruits and vegetables in nonplastic trays or containers

Frozen foods

Glass

Glass bottles, empty or filled with noncombustible liquids

Gypsum board

Inert pigments

Ivory

Meats

Metal cabinets

Metal desks with plastic tops and trim

Metal parts

Metals

Mirrors

Oil-filled and other types of distribution transformers

Parking garages, open or enclosed

Porcelain and pottery

Stoves

Talc and soapstones

Washers and dryers

SECTION 312 UTILITY AND MISCELLANEOUS GROUP U

312.1 General.

Buildings and structures of an accessory character and miscellaneous structures not classified in any specific occupancy shall be constructed, equipped and maintained to conform to the requirements of this code commensurate with the fire and life hazard incidental to their occupancy. Group U shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

Agricultural buildings

Aircraft hangars, accessory to a one- or two-family residence (see Section 412.3)

Barns

Carports

Fences more than 6 feet (1829 mm) high

Grain silos, accessory to a residential occupancy

Greenhouses

Livestock shelters

Private garages

Retaining walls

Sheds

Stables

Tanks

Towers

SECTION 313 LABORATORIES GROUP L [SFM]

313.1 Laboratories Group L. [SFM]

Group L occupancy includes the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, containing one or more laboratory suites as defined in Section 443.

MIXED OCCUPANCIES

Different Occupancies warrant different levels of separation – separated or non-separated (see Chapter 5).

TABLE 508.3.3 REQUIRED SEPARATION OF OCCUPANCIES (HOURS)

OCCUPANCY	A ^e , E		I		R ^d		F-2, S-2 ^{c,d} , U ^d		B ^b , F-1, M ^b , S-1		H-1		H-2		H-3, H-4, H-5	
	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	NS
A ^e , E ^e	N	N	2	2	1	2	N	1	1	2	NP	NP	3	4	2	3 ^a
I	—	—	N	N	2	NP	2	2	2 ^f	2 ^f	NP	NP	4	NP	4	NP
R ^d	—	—	—	—	N	N	1	2	1	2	NP	NP	3	NP	2	NP
F-2, S-2 ^{c,d} , U ^d	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	N	1	2	NP	NP	3	4	2	3 ^a
B ^b , F-1, M ^b , S-1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	N	NP	NP	2	3	1	2 ^a
H-1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
H-2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	NP	1	NP
H-3, H-4, H-5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	N	NP
L	2	NP	2	NP	4	NP	1	NP	1	NP	NP	NP	2	NP	1	NP

For SI: 1 square foot = 0.0929 m².

S = Buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#).

NS = Buildings not equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with [Section 903.3.1.1](#).

N = No separation requirement.

NP = Not permitted.

a. For Group H-5 occupancies, see [Section 903.2.4.2.](#)

b. Occupancy separation need not be provided for storage areas within Groups B and M if the:

1. Area is less than 10 percent of the floor area;

2. Area is equipped with an automatic fire-extinguishing system and is less than 3,000 square feet; or

3. Area is less than 1,000 square feet.

c. Areas used only for private or pleasure vehicles shall be allowed to reduce separation by 1 hour.

d. See [Section 406.1.4.](#)

e. Commercial kitchens need not be separated from the restaurant seating areas that they serve.

f. [SFM] For Group I and F-1 occupancies shall have a 3-hour separation.