

BEDROOM DEFINITION

Intent and Benefit

To establish a consistent and code-compliant definition of a bedroom for use in environmental health, occupancy determinations, program compliance, and to ensure alignment with onsite wastewater system design capacity and public health standards.

This policy definition is intended to size the on-site sewage system to the actual carrying capacity of the residence regardless of how any particular resident might be utilizing the structure at any given point in time. This definition will provide a common language for the discussion of residential structure size as it relates to the adequacy of the on-site sewage system.

Background Information

Various informal definitions of a bedroom have been used in the past. This has led to confusion and a lack of consistency among staff. The building department does not have a definition for a bedroom and thus the policy is necessary for purposes of sizing on-site sewage systems. An objective definition of room utilization is needed to adequately size the on-site sewage system for the possible maximum use of the residence.

Statement of Problem

An applicant may utilize rooms in a residence in one particular way. And the next resident may more fully utilize rooms to their maximum potential. If on-site sewage systems are sized according to the subjective and perhaps minimal use of the first resident, then the sewage system is at risk of being undersized for the full maximum use that any subsequent owner could legitimately make of the residence.

Details of Policy Procedures

A bedroom, for purposes of sizing on-site sewage systems, shall be defined as: any room designated by applicant as a "bedroom"; other rooms, such as sewing rooms, dens, offices, studios, lofts, game rooms, etc. may also be considered as bedrooms. For the purposes of this policy, a tiny home is at least one bedroom.

Room features must be clearly labeled on the floor plans submitted to Mendocino County Planning and Building Services (PBS) to ensure proper evaluation.

Rooms having one or more of the following features may not be considered by the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to constitute a bedroom:

1. A large (6-8 feet opening) arched frameless doorway without a door which opens onto the entry way or a main activity area.
2. Use of a half wall or railing along at least one side of the room.

3. If the space is 70 square feet or less.
4. If the space is unconditioned.

Notwithstanding the above provisions, the minimum number of bedrooms for any dwelling shall be no less than the following:

<u>Gross Floor Area</u>	<u>No. of Bedrooms</u>
0 – 1500 SF	1
1501 – 2100 SF	2
2101 – 3000 SF	3
Over 3001 SF	4

For the purposes of this policy, conditioned space is defined as follows:

1. An area or room within a building being heated or cooled containing uninsulated related ducts or with a fixed opening directly into an adjacent conditioned space.
2. A space is conditioned if it is heated or cooled directly or where a space is indirectly supplied with heating or cooling through uninsulated walls, floors or uninsulated ducts or heating, ventilating and air-conditioning (HVAC) piping.
3. A cooled space is an enclosed space within a building that is cooled by a cooling system whose sensible output capacity exceeds 5 Btu/h-ft² of floor area.
4. A directly conditioned space is an enclosed space that is provided with:
 - a. Wood heating
 - b. Mechanical heating that has a capacity exceeding 10 Btu/hr-ft²
 - c. Mechanical cooling that has a capacity exceeding 5 Btu/hr-ft²

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Director's Initials: DAK