

Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health

Policy 4200.04

BEDROOM DEFINITION

Intent and Benefit

To establish a consistent and code-complaint 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 number of bedrooms proposed in~~ 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-sizing~~ 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 EH staff. The County 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 ensure the number of bedrooms in a residence is the same number of bedrooms accounted for in~~ the on-site sewage system ~~for the possible maximum use of the residence.~~

Statement of Problem

~~An applicants apply for a building application citing a different number of bedrooms than those listed in the on-site sewage system plans. In order to release a building application the two need to match. 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 with legal egress (as defined by the California Building Code) that is designated by applicant as a "bedroom"; other rooms, such as sewing rooms, dens, offices, studios, lofts, game rooms, etc. ~~may shall~~ 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.

Bedroom Definition

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

1. A ~~large (6-8 feet opening)~~ 4 foot wide or greater arched ~~frameless~~ doorway without a door which opens onto the entry way or a main activity area.
2. ~~Use of~~ If the space uses a half wall or railing along at least one side of the room.
- 2.3. If the space is a loft without its own independent full bathroom.
4. If the space is 70 square feet or less.
- 3.5. If the space is an interior room that must be passed through to access another bedroom.
- 4.6. If the space is ~~not a~~ unconditioned space*.

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*For the purpose 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

Conditioned Space is defined as “an enclosed space within a building that is directly or indirectly conditioned:

- a. Directly conditioned space generally includes an enclosed space provided with wood heating, mechanical, heating Exceeding 10 BTU per hour per square foot, or mechanical cooling exceeding 5 BTU per hour per square foot. Process spaces are excluded from this definition.
- b. Indirectly conditioned space is not directly heated or cooled but is substantially open or thermally connected to an adjacent conditioned space, or when conditioned air is intentionally transferred into the space at a rate exceeding 3 air exchanges per hour.
- c. Unconditioned space is an enclosed space within a building that is not considered space per the definition outlined in section 100.1 of the California energy code, title 24, part six.

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Bedroom Definition

Effective Date: July 1, 2007

Revised Date: ~~January 26~~ September, 2026

Director's Initials: DAK

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