

OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION AND USE

User notes:

About this chapter: Chapter 3 provides the criteria by which buildings and structures are classified into use groups and occupancies. Through the balance of the code, occupancy classification is fundamental in the setting of features of construction; occupant safety requirements, especially building limitations; means of egress; fire protection systems; and interior finishes.

Code development reminder: Code change proposals to sections preceded by the designation [F] will be considered by the IFC code development committee meeting during the 2024 (Group A) Code Development Cycle. All other code change proposals will be considered by a code development committee meeting during the 2025 (Group B) Code Development Cycle.

SECTION 301—SCOPE

301.1 General. The provisions of this chapter shall control the classification of all *buildings* and *structures* as to occupancy and use. Different classifications of occupancy and use represent varying levels of hazard and risk to *building* occupants and adjacent properties.

SECTION 302—OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION AND USE DESIGNATION

302.1 Occupancy classification. Occupancy classification is the formal designation of the primary purpose of the *building*, *structure* or portion thereof. *Structures* shall be classified into one or more of the occupancy groups specified in this section based on the nature of the hazards and risks to *building* occupants generally associated with the intended purpose of the *building* or *structure*. An area, room or space that is intended to be occupied at different times for different purposes shall comply with all applicable requirements associated with such potential multipurpose. *Structures* containing multiple occupancy groups shall comply with Section 508. Where a *structure* is proposed for a purpose that is not specified in this section, such *structure* shall be classified in the occupancy it most nearly resembles based on the fire safety and relative hazard. *Occupiable roofs* shall be classified in the group that the occupancy most nearly resembles, according to the fire safety and relative hazard, and shall comply with Section 503.1.4.

1. Assembly (see Section 303): Groups A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4 and A-5.
2. Business (see Section 304): Group B.
3. Educational (see Section 305): Group E.
4. Factory and Industrial (see Section 306): Groups F-1 and F-2.
5. High Hazard (see Section 307): Groups H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4 and H-5.
6. Institutional (see Section 308): Groups I-1, I-2, I-3 and I-4.
7. Mercantile (see Section 309): Group M.
8. Residential (see Section 310): Groups R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4.
9. Storage (see Section 311): Groups S-1 and S-2.
10. Utility and Miscellaneous (see Section 312): Group U.

302.2 Use designation. Occupancy groups contain subordinate uses having similar hazards and risks to *building* occupants. Uses include, but are not limited to, those functional designations specified within the occupancy group descriptions in Section 302.1. Certain uses require specific limitations and controls in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 4 and elsewhere in this code.

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.

303.1.1 Small buildings and tenant spaces. 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.

303.1.2 Small assembly spaces. The following rooms and spaces shall not be classified as Assembly occupancies:

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

303.1.3 Associated with Group E occupancies. A room or space used for assembly purposes that is associated with a Group E occupancy is not considered a separate occupancy.

303.1.4 Accessory to places of religious worship. Accessory religious educational rooms and religious auditoriums with *occupant loads* of less than 100 per room or space are not considered separate occupancies.



303.1.5 Special amusement areas. *Special amusement areas* shall comply with Section 411.

303.2 Assembly Group A-1. Group A-1 occupancy includes assembly uses, usually with *fixed seating*, intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts or motion pictures, including but not limited to:

- Motion picture theaters
- Symphony and concert halls
- Television and radio studios admitting an audience
- Theaters

303.3 Assembly Group A-2. Group A-2 occupancy includes assembly uses intended for food and/or drink consumption, including but not limited to:

- Banquet halls
- Casinos (*gaming areas*)
- Nightclubs
- Restaurants, cafeterias and similar dining *facilities* (including associated commercial kitchens)
- Taverns and bars

303.4 Assembly Group A-3. Group A-3 occupancy includes 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
- Community halls
- Courtrooms
- Dance halls (not including food or drink consumption)
- Exhibition halls
- Funeral parlors
- Greenhouses* for the conservation and exhibition of plants that provide public access
- Gymnasiums (without spectator seating)
- Indoor *swimming pools* (without spectator seating)
- Indoor tennis courts (without spectator seating)
- Lecture halls
- Libraries
- Museums
- Places of religious worship*
- Pool and billiard parlors
- Waiting areas in transportation terminals

303.5 Assembly Group A-4. Group A-4 occupancy includes 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

303.6 Assembly Group A-5. Group A-5 occupancy includes assembly uses intended for participation in or viewing outdoor activities, including but not limited to:

- Amusement park *structures*
- Bleachers*
- Grandstands*
- Stadiums

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
- Ambulatory care facilities*
- Animal hospitals, kennels and pounds
- Banks
- Barber and beauty shops
- Car wash
- Civic administration
- Clinic, outpatient*
- Dry cleaning and laundries: pick-up and delivery stations and self-service
- Educational occupancies for students above the 12th grade including *higher education laboratories*
- Electronic data entry
- Food processing establishments and commercial kitchens not associated with restaurants, cafeterias and similar dining *facilities* not more than 2,500 square feet (232 m²) in area
- Laboratories: testing and research
- Lithium-ion or lithium metal battery testing, research and development
- 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 in a school or academic program (this shall include, but not be limited to, tutoring centers, martial arts studios, gymnastics and similar uses regardless of the ages served, and where not classified as a Group A occupancy)



304.2 Airport traffic control towers. Airport traffic control towers shall comply with Section 412.2.

304.3 Ambulatory care facilities. *Ambulatory care facilities* shall comply with Section 422.

304.4 Higher education laboratories. *Higher education laboratories* shall comply with Section 428.

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 six or more *persons* at any one time for educational purposes through the 12th grade.

305.1.1 Accessory to places of religious worship. Religious educational rooms and religious auditoriums, which are accessory to *places of religious worship* in accordance with Section 303.1.4 and have *occupant loads* of less than 100 per room or space, shall be classified as Group A-3 occupancies.

305.2 Group E, day care facilities. This group includes *buildings and structures* or portions thereof occupied by more than five children older than 2¹/₂ years of age who receive educational, supervision or *personal care services* for fewer than 24 hours per day.

305.2.1 Within places of religious worship. Rooms and spaces within *places of religious worship* providing such day care during religious functions shall be classified as part of the primary occupancy.

305.2.2 Five or fewer children. A *facility* having five or fewer children receiving such day care shall be classified as part of the primary occupancy.

305.2.3 Five or fewer children in a dwelling unit. A *facility* such as the above within a *dwelling unit* and having five or fewer children receiving such day care shall be classified as a Group R-3 occupancy or shall comply with the *International Residential Code*.

305.3 Storm shelters in Group E occupancies. *Storm shelters* shall be provided for Group E occupancies where required by Section 423.5.

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 Moderate-hazard factory industrial, Group F-1. Factory industrial uses that 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 (manufacturing, not to include repair)

Appliances

Athletic equipment

Automobiles and other motor vehicles

Bakeries

Beverages: over 20-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

Energy storage systems (ESS) in dedicated use *buildings*

Energy storage systems (ESS) and equipment containing lithium-ion or lithium metal batteries

Engines (including rebuilding)

Food processing establishments and commercial kitchens not associated with restaurants, cafeterias and similar dining *facilities* more than 2,500 square feet (232 m²) in area

Furniture

Hemp products

Jute products

Laundries

Leather products

Lithium-ion batteries

Machinery

Metals

Millwork (sash and door)

Motion pictures and television filming (without spectators)

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
- Vehicles powered by lithium-ion or lithium metal batteries
- Water/sewer treatment *facilities*
- Wood; distillation
- Woodworking (cabinet)

306.2.1 Aircraft manufacturing facilities. Aircraft manufacturing *facilities* shall comply with Section 412.6.

306.3 Low-hazard factory industrial, Group F-2. Factory industrial uses that involve the fabrication or manufacturing of noncombustible materials that during finishing, packing or processing do not involve a significant fire hazard shall be classified as Group F-2 occupancies and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Beverages: up to and including 20-percent alcohol content
- Brick and *masonry*
- Ceramic products
- Foundries
- Glass products
- Gypsum
- Ice
- Metal products (fabrication and assembly)

SECTION 307—HIGH-HAZARD GROUP H

[F] 307.1 High-hazard Group H. 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* complying with Section 414, based on the maximum allowable quantity limits for *control areas* set forth in Tables 307.1(1) and 307.1(2). Hazardous occupancies 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 *International Fire Code*. *Hazardous materials* stored or used on top of roofs or *canopies* shall be classified as rooftop storage or use and shall comply with the *International Fire Code*.



[F] TABLE 307.1(1)—MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY PER CONTROL AREA OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS POSING A PHYSICAL HAZARD ^{a, c, i, l, m}											
MATERIAL	CLASS	GROUP WHEN THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY IS EXCEEDED	STORAGE ^b			USE-CLOSED SYSTEMS ^b			USE-OPEN SYSTEMS ^b		
			Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	
Combustible dust	NA	H-2	See Note o	NA	NA	See Note o	NA	NA	See Note o	NA	
Combustible fiber ^o	Loose	H-3	(100)	NA	NA	(100)	NA	NA	(20)	NA	
	Baled		(1,000)			(1,000)			(200)		
Combustible liquid ⁿ	II	H-2 or H-3	NA	120 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	30 ^d	
	IIIA	H-2 or H-3		330 ^{d, e}						330 ^d	80 ^d
	IIIB	NA		13,200 ^{e, f}						13,200 ^f	3,300 ^f
Cryogenic flammable	NA	H-2	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	10 ^d	
Cryogenic inert	NA	NA	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	
Cryogenic oxidizing	NA	H-3	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	10 ^d	

[F] TABLE 307.1(1)—MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY PER CONTROL AREA OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS POSING A PHYSICAL HAZARD^{b, c, i, l, m}—continued

MATERIAL	CLASS	GROUP WHEN THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY IS EXCEEDED	STORAGE ^b			USE-CLOSED SYSTEMS ^b			USE-OPEN SYSTEMS ^b					
			Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)				
Explosives	Division 1.1	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g				
	Division 1.2	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}		0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g		0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g				
	Division 1.3	H-1 or H-2	5 ^{e, g}	(5) ^{e, g}		1 ^g	(1) ^g		1 ^g	(1) ^g				
	Division 1.4	H-3	50 ^{e, g}	(50) ^{e, g}		50 ^g	(50) ^g		NA	NA				
	Division 1.4G	H-3	125 ^{e, k}	NA		NA	NA		NA	NA				
	Division 1.5	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}		0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g		0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g				
	Division 1.6	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	NA		NA	NA		NA	NA	NA			
Flammable gas	Gaseous	H-2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
	1A and 1B (High BV) ^p										1,000 ^{d, e}	1,000 ^{d, e}		
	1B (Low BV) ^p										162,500 ^{d, e}	162,500 ^{d, e}		
	Liquefied										NA	(150) ^{d, e}	(150) ^{d, e}	NA
	1A and 1B (High BV) ^p													
	1B (Low BV) ^p													
Flammable liquid ⁿ	IA	H-2 or H-3	NA	30 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	30 ^d	NA	NA	10 ^d				
	IB and IC			120 ^{d, e}			120 ^d		30 ^d					
Flammable liquid, combination (IA, IB, IC) ⁿ	NA	H-2 or H-3	NA	120 ^{d, e, h}	NA	NA	120 ^{d, h}	NA	NA	30 ^{d, h}				
Flammable solid	NA	H-3	125 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	125 ^d	NA	NA	25 ^d	NA				
Inert gas	Gaseous	NA	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA				
	Liquefied	NA	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA				
Organic peroxide	UD	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g				
	I	H-2	5 ^{d, e}	(5) ^{d, e}		1 ^d	(1) ^d		1 ^d	(1) ^d				
	II	H-3	50 ^{d, e}	(50) ^{d, e}		50 ^d	(50) ^d		10 ^d	(10) ^d				
	III	H-3	125 ^{d, e}	(125) ^{d, e}		125 ^d	(125) ^d		25 ^d	(25) ^d				
	IV	NA	NL	NL		NL	NL		NL	NL				
	V	NA	NL	NL		NL	NL		NL	NL				
Oxidizer	4	H-1	1 ^g	(1) ^{e, g}	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g				
	3 ^j	H-2 or H-3	10 ^{d, e}	(10) ^{d, e}		2 ^d	(2) ^d		2 ^d	(2) ^d				
	2	H-3	250 ^{d, e}	(250) ^{d, e}		250 ^d	(250) ^d		50 ^d	(50) ^d				
	1	NA	4,000 ^{e, f}	(4,000) ^{e, f}		4,000 ^f	(4,000) ^f		1,000 ^f	(1,000) ^f				
Oxidizing gas	Gaseous	H-3	NA	NA	1,500 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	1,500 ^{d, e}	NA	NA				
	Liquefied			(150) ^{d, e}	NA		(150) ^{d, e}	NA						

[F] TABLE 307.1(1)—MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY PER CONTROL AREA OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS POSING A PHYSICAL HAZARD^{a, c, i, l, m}—continued

MATERIAL	CLASS	GROUP WHEN THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY IS EXCEEDED	STORAGE ^b			USE-CLOSED SYSTEMS ^b			USE-OPEN SYSTEMS ^b	
			Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)	Gas (cubic feet at NTP)	Solid pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid gallons (pounds)
Pyrophoric	NA	H-2	4 ^{e, g}	(4) ^{e, g}	50 ^{e, g}	1 ^g	(1) ^g	10 ^{e, g}	0	0
Unstable (reactive)	4	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}	10 ^{e, g}	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g	2 ^{e, g}	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g
	3	H-1 or H-2	5 ^{d, e}	(5) ^{d, e}	50 ^{d, e}	1 ^d	(1) ^d	10 ^{d, e}	1 ^d	(1) ^d
	2	H-3	50 ^{d, e}	(50) ^{d, e}	750 ^{d, e}	50 ^d	(50) ^d	750 ^{d, e}	10 ^d	(10) ^d
	1	NA	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL
Water reactive	3	H-2	5 ^{d, e}	(5) ^{d, e}	NA	5 ^d	(5) ^d	NA	1 ^d	(1) ^d
	2	H-3	50 ^{d, e}	(50) ^{d, e}		50 ^d	(50) ^d		10 ^d	(10) ^d
	1	NA	NL	NL		NL	NL		NL	NL

For SI: 1 cubic foot = 0.028 m³, 1 pound = 0.454 kg, 1 gallon = 3.785 L.
 NL = Not Limited; NA = Not Applicable; UD = Unclassified Detonable.

- For use of control areas, see Section 414.2.
- The aggregate quantity in use and storage shall not exceed the maximum allowable quantity for storage, including applicable increases.
- For hazardous materials in Group B higher education laboratory occupancies, see Section 428 of this code and Chapter 38 of the *International Fire Code*.
- Maximum allowable quantities shall be increased 100 percent in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1. Where Note e also applies, the increase for both notes shall be applied cumulatively.
- Maximum allowable quantities shall be increased 100 percent when stored in approved storage cabinets, day boxes, gas cabinets, gas rooms or exhausted enclosures or in listed safety cans in accordance with Section 5003.9.10 of the *International Fire Code*. Where Note d also applies, the increase for both notes shall be applied cumulatively.
- Quantities shall not be limited in a building equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.
- Allowed only in buildings equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.
- Containing not more than the maximum allowable quantity per control area of Class IA, IB or IC flammable liquids.
- Quantities in parentheses indicate quantity units in parentheses at the head of each column.
- A maximum quantity of 220 pounds of solid or 22 gallons of liquid Class 3 oxidizers is allowed when such materials are necessary for maintenance purposes, operation or sanitation of equipment when the storage containers and the manner of storage are approved.
- Net weight of the pyrotechnic composition of the fireworks. Where the net weight of the pyrotechnic composition of the fireworks is not known, 25 percent of the gross weight of the fireworks, including packaging, shall be used.
- For gallons of liquids, divide the amount in pounds by 10 in accordance with Section 5003.1.2 of the *International Fire Code*.
- For oxidizers, unstable (reactive) materials, and water-reactive materials stored or displayed in Group M occupancies or stored in Group S occupancies, see Section 414.2.5.1.
- For flammable and combustible liquid storage in Group M occupancy wholesale and retail sales uses, see Section 414.2.5.2.
- Where manufactured, generated or used in such a manner that the concentration and conditions create a fire or explosion hazard based on information prepared in accordance with Section 414.1.3.
- "High BV" Category 1B flammable gas has a burning velocity greater than 3.9 inches per second (10 cm/s). "Low BV" Category 1B flammable gas has a burning velocity of 3.9 inches per second (10 cm/s) or less.