

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 2027 (Group A) Code Development Cycle. All other code change proposals will be considered by a code development committee meeting during the 2028 (Group B) Code Development Cycle.
Relocations:	Material in this chapter, or that was in this chapter in the last code cycle, has been relocated. For complete information regarding the relocation of sections, tables and figures, see “Content Relocations” in the Preface of this code.

SECTION 301—GENERAL

301.1 Scope. Classification of all *buildings* and *structures* as to occupancy and use shall comply with this chapter.

**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
Classrooms having an *occupant load* of 50 or more and used for educational purposes above the 12th grade
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 or outdoor *swimming pools* (without spectator seating)
Indoor or outdoor 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
Clinical laboratories
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.

304.5 Clinical laboratories. Clinical laboratories shall comply with Section 429.

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.



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305.2 Group E, day care facilities. This group includes *buildings* and *structures* or portions thereof occupied by more than five children older than 2 1/2 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. Such a facility, located within a detached one- or two-family *dwelling* or *townhouse unit* that is within the scope of the *International Residential Code*, shall be constructed in accordance with this code or the *International Residential Code* provided that such a facility is protected by an *automatic sprinkler system* installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.3 of this code or Section P2904 of 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
- Data center* housing information technology equipment engaged in data processing where not classified as a *computer room*
- 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*. For Group M occupancy display and storage areas and Group S occupancy storage areas, see Section 414.2.5.



[F] TABLE 307.1(1)—MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE QUANTITY PER CONTROL AREA OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS POSING A PHYSICAL HAZARD ^{a, c, i, l, m, o}											
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)	Gaseous cubic feet at NTP	Liquified pounds	Solid Pounds (cubic feet)	Liquid Gallons (pounds)	Gaseous cubic feet at NTP	Liquified pounds	Solid Pounds (cubic feet)
Combustible dust	NA	H-2	See Note p	NA	NA	NA	See Note p	NA	NA	NA	See Note p
Combustible fiber ^p	Loose	H-3	(100)	NA	NA	NA	(100)	NA	NA	NA	(20)
	Baled		(1,000)	NA	NA	NA	(1,000)	NA	NA	NA	(200)
Combustible liquid ⁿ	II	H-2 or H-3	NA	120 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	NA	120 ^d	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	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	10 ^d
Cryogenic inert	NA	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	NA	NL	NA	NA	NA
Cryogenic oxidizing	NA	H-3	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	NA	45 ^d	NA	NA	10 ^d
	Division 1.1	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, g}	NA	NA	0.25 ^g	(0.25) ^g	NA	NA	0.25 ^g
	Division 1.2	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	(1) ^{e, 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
Explosives	Division 1.4	H-3	50 ^{e, g}	(50) ^{e, g}			50 ^g	(50) ^g			NA
	Division 1.4G	H-3	125 ^{e, k}	NA	NA	NA	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
	Division 1.6	H-1	1 ^{e, g}	NA			NA	NA			NA
Flammable gas	1A and 1B (High BV) ^q	H-2 or H-3	NA	NA	1,000 ^{d, e}	150 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	1,000 ^{d, e}	150 ^{d, e}	NA
	1B (Low BV) ^q				162,500 ^{d, e}	10,000 ^{d, e}			162,500 ^{d, e}	10,000 ^{d, e}	
Flammable liquid ⁿ	IA	H-2 or H-3	NA	30 ^{d, e}	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	10 ^d
	IB and IC			120 ^{d, e}							30 ^d
Flammable liquid, combination ⁿ	IA, IB, IC	H-2 or H-3	NA	120 ^{d, e, h}	NA	NA	NA	120 ^{d, h}	NA	NA	30 ^{d, h}