



# **PART** **2**

## **Building Planning**

### **Chapters 3 through 6**

- **Chapter 3** Use and Occupancy Classification
- **Chapter 4** Special Detailed Requirements Based on Use and Occupancy
- **Chapter 5** General Building Heights and Areas
- **Chapter 6** Types of Construction

The application of the *California Building Code* to a structure is typically initiated through the provisions of Chapters 3, 5, and 6. Chapter 3 establishes one or more occupancy classifications based upon the anticipated uses of a building. The appropriate classifications are necessary to properly apply many of the code's nonstructural provisions. The requirements of Chapter 6 deal with classification as to construction type, based on a building's materials of construction and the level of fire resistance provided by such materials. Limitations on a building's height and area, set forth in Chapter 5, are directly related to the occupancies it houses and its type of construction. Chapter 5 also provides the various methods available to address conditions in which multiple uses or occupancies occur within the same building. Chapter 4 contains special detailed requirements based on unique conditions or uses that are found in some buildings. ■

#### **303.1.3**

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**507.1**

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Incidental Uses—Rooms or Areas

**602.1**

Fire-Resistance Rating Requirements for Solar Photovoltaic Systems



## 303.1.3

### Assembly Rooms Associated with Group E Occupancies

**CHANGE TYPE:** Clarification

**CHANGE SUMMARY:** The allowance for a Group E classification of accessory assembly spaces in school buildings has been clarified so as to not confuse the provision with the mixed-occupancies requirements dealing with accessory occupancies as regulated by Section 508.2.

**2013 CODE: 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.

**Exceptions:**

**1. 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.

**2. 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.
- 3.2. A room or space used for assembly purposes that is less than 750 square feet (70 m<sup>2</sup>) in area and accessory to another occupancy shall be classified as a Group B occupancy or as part of that occupancy.



High school gymnasium/auditorium.

**4. 303.1.3 Associated with Group E Occupancies.** ~~Assembly areas that are accessory to Group E occupancies are not considered separate occupancies except when applying the assembly occupancy requirements of Chapter 11. A room or space used for assembly purposes that is associated with a Group E occupancy is not considered a separate occupancy.~~

**5. 303.1.4 Accessory to Places of Religious Worship.** Accessory religious educational rooms and religious auditoriums with occupant loads of less than 100 are not considered separate occupancies.

**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** Where persons gather for civic, social, or religious functions; recreation; food or drink consumption; and similar activities, the function is considered “assembly” in nature. Classification as a Group A occupancy is typically warranted, unless the space is relatively small or the occupant load is relatively low. In addition, assembly spaces—such as gymnasiums and auditoriums—directly related to Group E educational occupancies are not generally classified as Group A occupancies but rather as simply portions of the Group E building. The allowance for the Group E classification of “accessory” assembly spaces in school buildings has been clarified by modifying the code to address “associated” assembly spaces so as to not confuse the provision with the mixed-occupancies requirements dealing with accessory occupancies as regulated by Section 508.2. The application of the provision continues to be appropriate to those assembly areas of school buildings—such as gymnasiums and auditoriums—that are primarily an extension of the educational function.

The reference to Chapter 11 was also removed as it was deemed unnecessary in the application of accessibility provisions as they apply to assembly areas. The accessibility requirements for fixed-seating facilities, dining areas, and other assembly seating areas are based on the general function of assembly activities and not tied to an occupancy classification. In addition, the assembly means of egress provisions of Section 1028 are also identified as applicable to assembly spaces within Group E occupancies. A number of other text changes were made throughout the code to focus on the use of the space for assembly purposes, rather than the occupancy classification.

# 303.3

## Occupancy Classification of Casino Gaming Floors

**CHANGE TYPE:** Addition

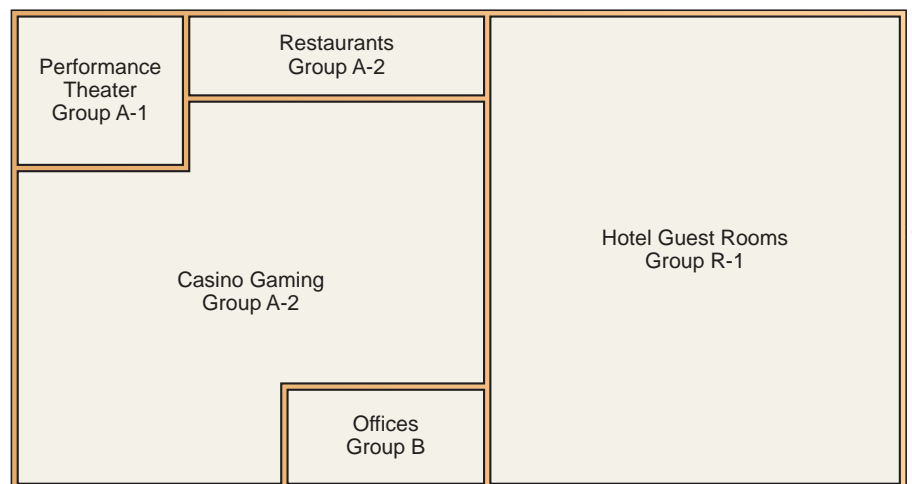
**CHANGE SUMMARY:** The classification of a casino gaming floor is now specifically identified as a Group A-2 occupancy.

**2013 CODE: 303.3 Assembly Group A-2.** Assembly uses intended for food and/or drink consumption including, but not limited to:

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

**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** Assembly uses classified as Group A occupancies are further subclassified into one of five occupancy groups. Many assembly uses are specifically identified as to which classification they most typically belong through the listing of various uses found within each subclassification. Casino gaming floors have traditionally been considered as Group A occupancies where the occupant load is 50 or more persons; however, there has been disagreement over the specific classification of such uses as they previously have not been listed in the code. The classification of a casino gaming floor is now specifically identified as a Group A-2 occupancy.

Assigning an occupancy group to a casino gaming floor has varied due to the lack of any specific mention as to its proper classification. Although the degree of hazard has caused some to historically classify the use as a Group A-2 occupancy, the lack of a specific mention often resulted in applying the default provisions associated with Group A-3 occupancies. And although a casino gaming floor does not seem to fit into a classification reserved for food and/or drink consumption, it has been determined that there are similar hazard characteristics with other uses classified as Group A-2. There are distracting lights, sounds, decorations, and, in many



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Classification of casino and related uses.

cases, alcoholic beverages are being consumed. Due to the various distractions, it is possible that the occupants will become disoriented and confused in an emergency situation and have difficulty locating the means of egress.

Classification of a casino gaming floor as a Group A-2 occupancy allows for application of the necessary provisions to address the expected hazards. It should be noted that small casino gaming facilities may be classified as Group B where they meet the conditions of Section 303.1.1 or 303.1.2. It is also important to note that the Group A-2 classification is limited to the gaming areas only. Other areas in a casino that may be associated with the gaming activities—such as restaurants, theaters, guest rooms, and administrative areas—are to be classified based upon their own individual function.

## 303.3, 306.2

### Occupancy Classification of Commercial Kitchens



Commercial kitchen.

**CHANGE TYPE:** Clarification

**CHANGE SUMMARY:** The appropriate occupancy classification of a commercial kitchen has been clarified based upon the kitchen's relationship, or lack of a relationship, to dining facilities.

**2013 CODE: 303.3 Assembly Group A-2.** Assembly uses intended for food and/or drink consumption including, but not limited to:

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

**306.2 Moderate-hazard Factory Industrial, Group F-1.** 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:

- Food processing and commercial kitchens not associated with restaurants, cafeterias, and similar dining facilities.
- (no changes to other uses on the list)

**CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE:** Commercial kitchens have historically been characterized as two different types, those that are directly associated with a restaurant or similar dining facility and those that are independent of any related dining area, such as a catering business. The appropriate occupancy classification of commercial kitchens has been clarified through text changes in three different areas of the code.

In Table 508.4 regulating separated occupancies, footnote d has been eliminated to help provide clarity to the classification of a commercial kitchen. The past presence of the footnote eliminating any required fire separation between a commercial kitchen and the restaurant seating area that it serves often led to a conclusion that the commercial kitchen needed to be classified differently than the associated dining area. It was occasionally assumed that if they were intended to both be classified as the same occupancy, that of the restaurant seating area, then there was no relevance to the footnote. However, common practice has always been to include the kitchen area as an extension of the restaurant seating area, causing both spaces to be considered as Group A-2, or Group B for smaller restaurants. In order to clarify the appropriate occupancy classification of the associated kitchen, the footnote has been deleted.

To further identify the classification of the two types of commercial kitchens, additional language has been added to the code listings of those uses classified as Group A-2 and Group F-1 occupancies. Commercial kitchens associated with restaurants, cafeterias, and similar dining facilities are now considered as a portion of the Group A-2 occupancies classification. Extending this concept, a kitchen associated with a small

Group B restaurant would simply be classified as a portion of the Group B occupancy. Although a commercial kitchen does not pose the same types of hazards as an assembly use, the allowance for a similar classification has generally been considered as an appropriate decision. Where the commercial kitchen is not associated with a dining facility, such as a catering business, the kitchen is to be classified as a Group F-1 occupancy in the same manner as any other food processing operations.