



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

B-2

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Application of Building Code Provisions To Partially Developed Areas In Residential Construction

INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines are provided as an aid in determining the code requirements for partially developed spaces in residential construction areas such as lofts and mezzanines. Attic spaces and similar areas should be clearly identified on the drawings. The intended use of such areas should be specified on the plans, including spaces for future use.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

- I. Space not designated for use and separated by walls, floors, or ceilings from designated usable areas.
 - A. Uninhabitable attics without storage.
 1. Unfinished walls.
 2. No sheathing on top of joists except for walkways to mechanical equipment, or as required for structural purposes.
 3. Electric lights and receptacles as required for mechanical or attic access only.
 4. No stairs (access per Section 1209).
 5. No plumbing fixtures.
 6. Maximum clear height between the joist and rafter is less than 42", or where there are not two or more adjacent trusses capable of containing a rectangle 42" high by 2' wide or greater, located within the plane of the truss.
 7. Designed for a minimum 10 psf live load (need not act concurrently with other live load requirements).
 - B. Uninhabitable attics with limited storage.
 1. Unfinished walls.
 2. Not more than one-third of the attic space to have a maximum 5' head height (Section 1208.2.1), or code complying egress (Section 1009).
 3. Designed for a minimum 20 psf live load applied to those portions of the bottom chord where there are two or more adjacent trusses capable of containing a rectangle 42" high by 2' wide or greater, located within the plane of the truss.
 4. Minimum ceiling lights and convenience outlets.

- II. Space intended for occupancy or use. Specify intended use on drawing.
 - A. Storage space (non-habitable space):
 - 1. Code complying egress (Section 1009).
 - 2. No minimum ceiling height.
 - 3. Minimum ceiling lights and convenience outlets.
 - 4. Designed for 30 psf live load.
 - B. Habitable space
 - 1. Code complying egress (Section 1009).
 - 2. Minimum ceiling heights and room areas required (Section 1208).
 - 3. Meets energy standards.
 - 4. Designed for 30 psf live load for habitable attics and sleeping areas, and 40 psf live load for all other residential areas.
- III. Space intended for possible future use.
 - A. May include framing and sheathing sized for the future use.
 - B. Area should not be finished and a stairway will not be required. However, a location for a future complying stairway should be shown unless access will obviously not be a problem. The space should also be able in the future to accommodate other code requirements consistent with the proposed use.
 - C. If a stairway is installed the space should be considered usable and be developed accordingly.
- IV. Knick-knack and plant shelves and very low ceiling height storage areas.
 - A. Areas in buildings where decorations or minor storage may exist need not be developed with egress provisions or with rigidly applied live loads. These areas require judgement in application of code provisions consistent with the proposed use of the area. Small or narrow areas which would be accessible may be reached from portable ladders and which are unlikely to be used as walking surfaces fall in this category. Also areas with very low ceiling heights could fall in this category.

REFERENCES

2007 California Building Code: Section 1009, Section 1208, Section 1209, Table 1607.1 & footnotes: (i, j & k)