



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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Requirements for Unconditioned Spaces Attached to R-3 Occupancies

INTRODUCTION

The California Building Code defines what constitutes a *Dwelling Unit* and *Habitable Space*. It specifies the heating requirements for those spaces, the T-24 Energy Efficiency Standards, and further defines *Unconditioned Spaces*. However, the code is not clear as to what types of areas may be exempted from heating requirements under the description of "Utility Spaces and Similar Uses". *Patio Covers* require at least 65% of the enclosed walls to be open. These walls may be enclosed with insect screening or plastic. A similarity between sun rooms, solariums, atriums, solar rooms, conservatories and rooms of similar character can be made using the 65% opening criteria. It is apparent that such spaces having 65% of roof and wall areas glazed cannot be easily or economically heated. Rooms with less glazing may invite the opening of door or windows between *conditioned* and unconditioned spaces in an attempt to heat the sunroom.

Garages are often used for workshops, craft rooms, hobby shop and similar uses. These spaces may be classified as either habitable space within the R-3 occupancy or classified as U-1 Garage, Unconditioned Space.

Greenhouses and shade structures are classified as U-3 occupancies. The specified code provisions apply to these areas.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sunrooms, solariums, atriums, solar rooms, conservatories and rooms of similar character are encompassed under the definition of Utility Space. Such spaces should not be considered habitable space. The space must meet the following criteria to qualify as non-habitable space:

1. The room shall be separated by walls, and have openings constructed as required by the T-24 Energy Standards.
2. A minimum of 65% of the wall and roof area shall be glazed.
3. The room shall meet the T-24 Energy Standard definition for unconditioned space. Calculations must be provided to demonstrate the space is not an

indirectly conditioned space.

4. The room shall be clearly identified on the floor plans as unconditioned space and the use of the room shall be specified.

Any modification of these areas to conditioned space must meet current T-24 Energy Standards. Applicable permits are required.

One-story residential workshops and craft rooms may be classified as habitable space or as Group U-1. When classified as U-1, they must meet all the applicable code provisions.

One-story residential greenhouses when attached to R-3 may use the R-3/U-1 occupancy separation provisions of the code.

GLOSSARY

Conditioned Space: in residential compliance, conditioned space is space in a building that is either directly or indirectly conditioned.

Conditioned Space, indirectly: indirectly conditioned space is enclosed space including, but not limited to, unconditioned volume in atria, that (1) is not directly conditioned space; and (2) either (a) has an area-weighted heat transfer coefficient to directly conditioned space exceeding that to the outdoors or to unconditioned space, or (b) is a space through which air from directly conditioned spaces is transferred at a rate exceeding 3 air changes per hour.

Indirectly conditioned space must be included when calculating total conditioned floor area. Examples of areas that may be indirectly conditioned space include enclosed porches, enclosed sunrooms, laundry rooms and furnace closets.

Habitable Space: is a space in a structure for living sleeping, eating or cooking. Bathrooms, toilet compartments, closets, halls or utility space and similar areas are not considered habitable space.

Unconditioned Space: A space that is neither directly or indirectly conditioned space, which can be isolated from conditioned space by portions and/or closable doors.

REFERENCES

2001 California Building Code, Section 302.4, Ex.3
Appendix Chapter 3 Div II
Appendix Chapter 30 Div III
California Energy Efficiency Standards
Sonoma County Residential Construction Handbook Section 3
