



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

PERMIT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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B-8

Classification of Private Garages

INTRODUCTION

The California Building Code classifies a *private garage* as a Group U Div 1 occupancy. Buildings or parts of buildings classed as Group U Div 1 occupancies because of the use or character of the occupancy shall not exceed 1000 square feet in area or one story in height. Any building or portion of the building that exceeds the limitations specified must be classed in the occupancy group other than U-1 that it most nearly resembles.

The restrictions placed on private garages allow the modification of the occupancy separation between the U-1 and R-3 *dwelling unit*. In mixed occupancy buildings or buildings over one story in height the use of each portion must be clearly defined to properly apply the specific provisions of the code.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Agricultural buildings are occupancies whose use include the following; storage, livestock, poultry, milking barns, shade structures and horticultural structures (greenhouse and crop protection). Agricultural buildings exceeding the allowable area or height limitations for Group U Div 1 occupancy shall be classified as Group U Div 3.

Carports having no enclosed uses above and entirely open on two or more sides are classified U-1 but do not require an occupancy separation when attached to a Group R Div 3 occupancy.

Private garages not more than 1000 square feet in area may include work shops or storage areas. A garage used only for the storage of private or pleasure type motor vehicles where no repair work is done or fuel dispensed may be 3000 square feet. Group U Div 1 occupancies are restricted to one story in height but may have a complying mezzanine, i.e.

1. At least 7' clearance is required above and below the mezzanine floor;
2. The mezzanine floor area shall be no greater than 1/3 of the garage area.
3. The mezzanine shall be open to garage in which it is located (42" high walls are permitted for guard rail purposes.)

In buildings of two stories in height with a U-1 occupancy on the first floor, the second floor shall be classified by its use. In this case a workshop, hobby shop, or storage area should be classified as Group R Div 3. Design considerations for the second floor

include fire sprinklers, appropriate floor loads, occupancy separations, and means of egress.

The building may be classified as a Group S, Division 3 occupancy if it does not fit the above rules for a U-1 occupancy, however, the setback from the property line changes from 3' to 20', fire sprinklers are required, and the occupancy separation becomes a full separation rather than the modified separation allowed for a U-1.

REFERENCES

2008 California Building Code, Section 406.1
2006 IBC Code and Commentary
Sonoma County Code, section 7-13
Sonoma County Residential Construction Handbook Section 18

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