

Definition of Bedroom

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide guidance to PRMD staff when reviewing permit applications, checking plans, investigating complaints and inspecting buildings as to the approved intended use of a room. These guidelines will be used by all staff in determining whether a room will be considered a bedroom (sleeping room).

GENERAL

The Zoning Ordinance, the California Building Code and PRMD regulations relating to septic systems contain various definitions of bedrooms. This policy will provide a uniform interpretation for all of these codes.

AUTHORITY

Chapter 7, Sonoma County Code
California Building Code

FORMS

- A. Conditional Statement Acknowledgment
- B. Notice of Use Restrictions

PROCEDURE

A. Definitions

1. Attached room: Rooms will be considered to be attached to and part of a dwelling unit if they are connected by a common wall, or by a common roof, covered walkway, carport or garage, not more than twenty feet (20') wide.
2. Bathroom (full bathroom): A room equipped with a toilet, sink and shower or bathtub.
3. Half bath: a bathroom which contains a toilet and sink but does not contain a bath tub or shower.
4. Bedroom: any space in a dwelling unit or accessory structure which is 70 square feet or greater in size and which is located along an exterior wall, but not including the following: hall; bathroom; kitchen; living room (maximum of one per dwelling unit); dining room (in proximity to kitchen, maximum of one per dwelling unit); family room (maximum of one per dwelling unit), laundry room, closet/dressing room opening off of a bedroom.

The Director of PRMD or his/her designee may grant exceptions if a room, by its design, cannot function as a bedroom. Sewing rooms, dens, studios, lofts, game rooms, and any other conditioned room along an exterior wall which is 70 square feet or greater in size will be considered to be bedrooms unless the room is specifically exempted. If a home office, library

or similar room is proposed, it may be exempted from being considered a bedroom if there is no closet and at least one of the following is present: a) permanently built-in bookcases, desks and other feature that encumber the room in such a way that it cannot be used as a bedroom; b) a minimum 4 foot opening, without doors, into another room; or c) a half wall (4 foot maximum height) between the room and another room. A detached building which contains only a half bath will not routinely be considered as having a bedroom unless it is specifically identified and permitted as a guest house.

When an exception is made per the above, it shall be documented in Permits Plus in the comments section so that all staff are aware of the determination. A conditional statement may be required to be signed by the property owner if the permit is for an outbuilding which has been determined to be a use other than a bedroom or other living space. This statement may be recorded as necessary to inform future property owners of restrictions on use of the building.

5. Conditioned space: An area, room or space normally occupied and being heated or cooled by any equipment for human habitation.

B. Applicability

1. All PRMD staff shall use the above guidelines in the course of their work. Any differences in interpretation shall be brought to the attention of the Director or designated supervisory staff, who will render a decision as to interpretation.
2. If an applicant desires to convert a structure from one use to another, the above guidelines shall be used as appropriate. Any modifications needed to the structure to effect a change of use shall be permanent and shall effectively remove any infrastructure associated with the original use of the structure.
3. In most cases, an accessory structure with a full bathroom will be considered as having a bedroom or bedrooms. The Director of PRMD or his/her designee may approve a full bath if necessary for agricultural or other purposes. Sufficient sewage disposal capacity must be available for the bathroom. If a full bath is approved, a conditional statement will be required to be signed by the property owner stating that the accessory structure is not approved as a dwelling unit and any use other than the approved use may constitute a violation of County Code. The conditional statement shall be recorded with the property deed.

ATTACHMENTS: None

Approved by:

/s/ Tennis Wick
Tennis Wick, Director

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