



City of Seattle
**Department of Construction and
Inspections**

2015 SBC Code Solution

**SBC Sections 1208.1 & 1208.3
Habitable Room Size**
Release Date: October 2017
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The following interpretation, policy or code alternate is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code alternate to specific projects may vary.

Code Issue:

How do I determine if a habitable room meets the dimensional requirements of Seattle Building Code (SBC), Section 1208.3?

Interpretation:

The room size is determined by both the minimum length in each direction, SBC 1208.1, and the total room area as defined in SBC 1208.3 for dwelling units.

The minimum room size of 70 square feet must measure a minimum of 7 feet in all directions. This measurement must be taken perpendicular to the walls. For example, if the room is 7 feet wide, the length must be 10 feet. Or, if the room is 8 feet wide, the length must be a minimum of 8 feet 9 inches. Any areas in the room that measure less than 7 feet do not count towards the 70 square feet.

Only portions of the room in which a 7 foot by 7 foot square can be placed are allowed to be counted toward the habitable space requirement. The sides of the square must align parallel to the walls.

The same measurement principles shall apply to meeting eligible areas for Efficiency Dwelling units (SBC 1208.4), Small Efficiency Dwelling Units (DR 9-2017), and sleeping units.

Refer to the following diagrams for examples of acceptable and unacceptable solutions.

For questions about whether this code solution applies to your project:

- *If you have submitted a permit application, contact the Building Code plan reviewer assigned to your application*
- *If you have not submitted an application, send us a question through the SDCI website <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/toolsresources/sendusaquestion/default.htm> or in person at the Applicant Services Center. Visit the Applicant Services Center website for more information about hours and location <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/aboutus/whoweare/applicantservicescenter/default.htm>*



Construction Review & Inspection Quality
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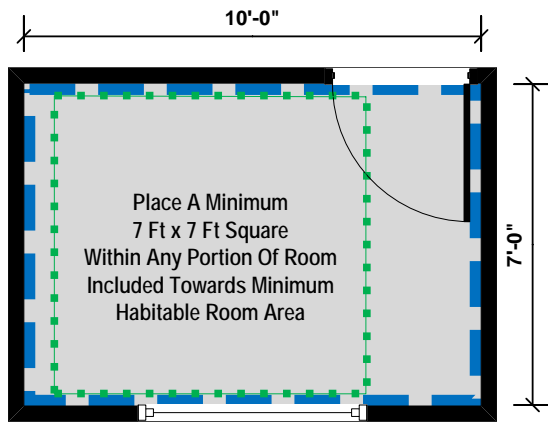


Figure 1
 Room Area: 70 SF
 Habitable Room Area: 70 SF

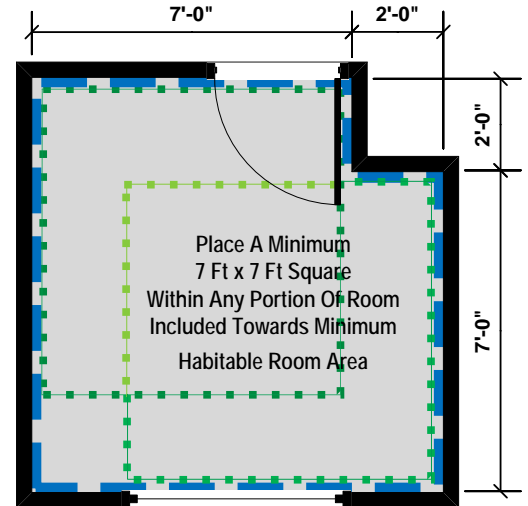


Figure 2
 Room Area: 77 SF
 Habitable Room Area: 77 SF

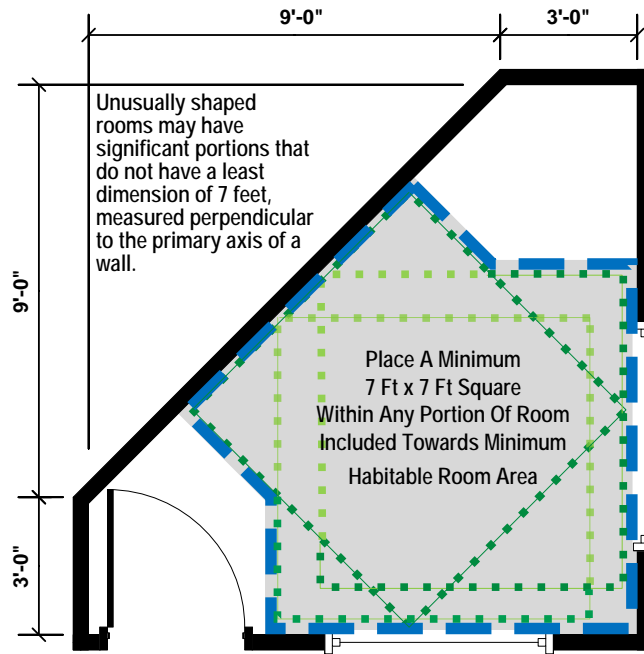


Figure 3
 Room Area: 103.5 SF
 Habitable Room Area: 70.5 SF

- Required 7 foot Square
- Habitable Room Area

- These spaces meet both the minimum 70 square feet in area and the minimum plan dimension of 7 feet in any direction.
- The *Habitable Room Area* is the total area of room where a 7 foot square will fit. Overlap areas are only counted once.



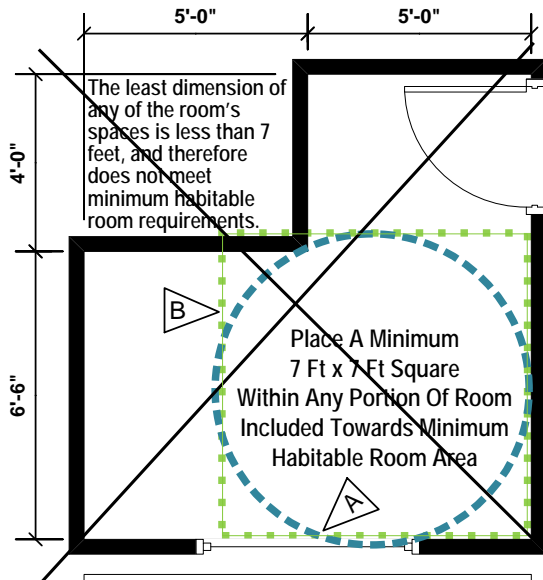


Figure 4
 Room Area: 85 SF*
 Habitable Room Area: 0 SF

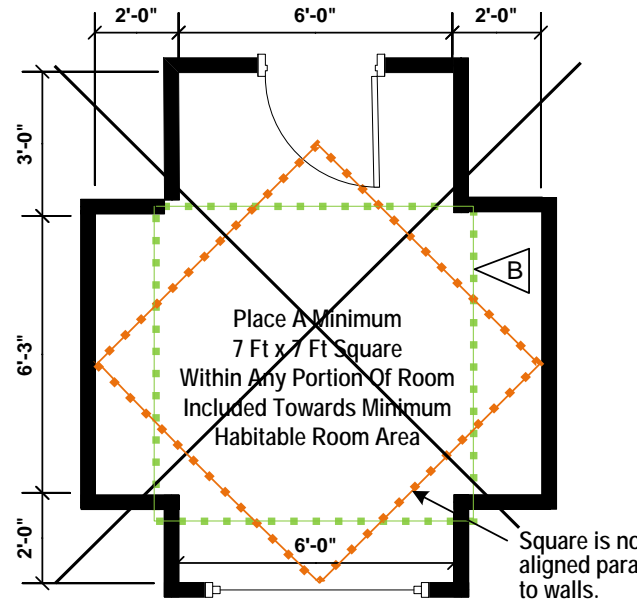


Figure 5
 Room Area: 93 SF*
 Habitable Room Area: 0 SF

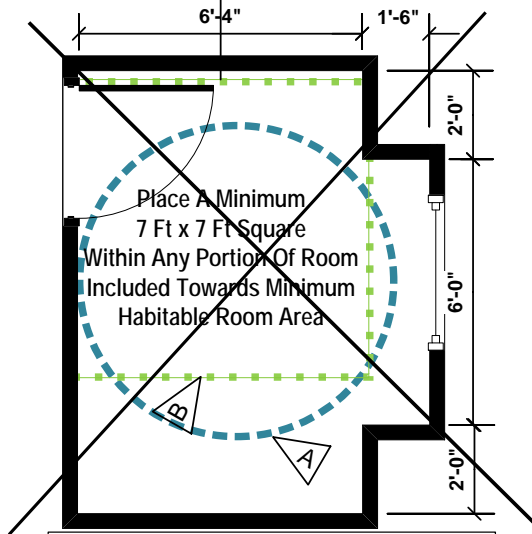


Figure 6
 Room Area: 72 SF*
 Habitable Room Area: 0 SF

*Although this meets the minimum area for a room it does not meet the habitable room width of at least 7 feet.

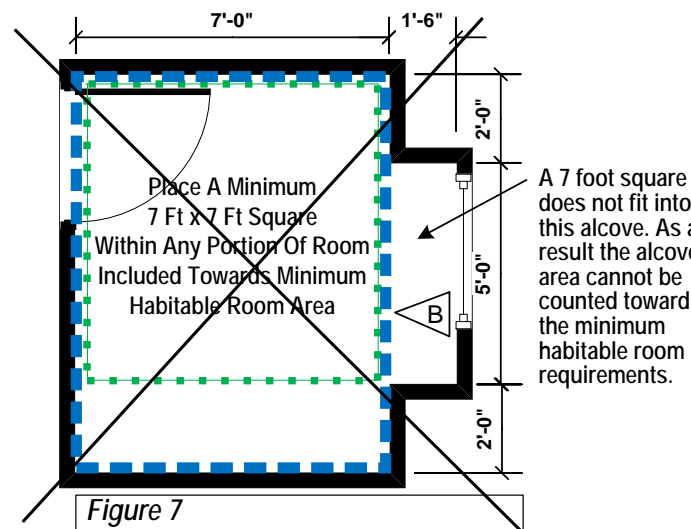


Figure 7
 Room Area: 70 SF
 63 SF Habitable Area < 70 Sf Req'd
 Habitable Room Area: 0 SF

X These layouts **DO NOT** meet minimum *Habitable Room Area* requirements.

A The minimum dimension must be 7 feet in all directions using a square. A 7 foot diameter circle or a 49 square foot circle are not allowed.

B The room size must accommodate a 7 foot square. Any alcove areas must have a minimum width dimension of 7 feet.

