



2015 SBC & SEBC Code Interpretation

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 does SDCI determine the occupancy classification of a building permitted under a previous edition of the Seattle Building Code.

Code Interpretation:

The occupancy classification designations included in past versions of the Seattle Building Code may be different than the occupancy classifications in the current code. SDCI bases occupancy classification changes on the description of the use, not the letter designation. This code interpretation provides a table correlating historical occupancy classifications with the occupancy classifications in the current edition.

The design professional may use the Historical Occupancy Classifications provided in Table 1 to appropriately classify spaces within a building per the current SBC 302.1.

Example: The occupancy classification for a building permitted under the 1979 Seattle Building Code as B-4 would be classified as either F-2 factory industrial or S-2 low hazard storage under the current edition of the Code.

Table 1 Historical Occupancy Classifications in Seattle

Code Edition	2003	1994	1991	1979	1973	1956
Effective Date of Code	Aug 15, 2005	Dec 3, 1995	Jan 19, 1992	Oct 17, 1979	May 7, 1977	Oct 11, 1956
Description of Occupancy						
Assembly uses, usually with fixed seating, intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts or motion pictures.	A-1	A-1 w/ O.L.<1000 & Leg. Stage	A-1 w/ O.L.<1000 & Leg. Stage	A-1 w/ O.L.<1000 & Leg. Stage	A-1 w/ O.L.<1000 & Leg. Stage	A-1 w/ O.L.<1500
		A-2 w/ O.L.>1000 & Leg. Stage	A-2 w/ O.L.>1000 & Leg. Stage	A-2 w/ O.L.>1000 & Leg. Stage	B-1 w/ O.L.>1000 & Leg. Stage	A-2 w/ O.L. 900 to 1500
		A-2.1 w/ O.L.<300 & no Stage	A-2.1 w/ O.L.<300 & no Stage	A-2.1 w/ O.L.<300 & no Stage	B-2 w/ O.L.<300 & no Stage	B-1 w/ O.L. 300 to 900



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Description of Occupancy						
		A-3 w/ O.L >300 & no Stage	A-3 w/ O.L >300 & no Stage	A-3 w/ O.L >300 & no Stage	B-3 w/ O.L >300 & no Stage	B-2 w/ O.L. >300
Assembly uses intended for food and/or drink consumption.	A-2	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, B-1, B-2 or B-3 w/ O.L.'s as above (Except drink/dine >100 is F-2)	A-1, A-2, B-1 or B-2 w/ O.L.'s as above (Except Restaurant >300 is F-2)
"Specialty Food Store" as it used to be referred to in the Land Use Code (with seating area)	A-2 restaurant, B-2 when >50	A-3 or M dependin g on O.L.	A-3 or B-2 depending on O.L.			
Assembly uses intended for worship, recreation or amusement and other assembly uses not classified elsewhere in Group A.	A-3	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, A-2, A-2.1 or A-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, B-1, B-2 or B-3 w/ O.L.'s as above	A-1, A-2, B-1 or B-2 w/ O.L.'s as above
Assembly uses intended for viewing of indoor sporting events and activities with spectator seating.	A-4	A-4	A-4	A-4	B-4	B-3
Assembly uses intended for participation in or viewing outdoor activities.	A-5	A-4	A-4	A-4	B-4	B-3
Business Group B occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, for office, professional or service-type transactions, including storage of records and accounts.	B	B	B-2	B-2	F-2	G
Educational Group E occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, by six or more persons at any one time for educational purposes through the 12 th grade.	E	E-1	E-1	E-1	C-1	C
Educational Group for less than 50 persons through the 12 th grade	E	E-2	E-2	E-2	C-2	C



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Day care. The use of a building or structure, or portion thereof, for educational, supervision or personal care services for more than five children older than 2 ½ years of age. (Note: No more than 5 children less than 2 ½ years old.)	E	E-3	E-3	E-3	C-3	H
Factory industrial uses which are not classified as Factory Industrial F-2 Low Hazard.	F-1	F-1	B-2	B-2	F-2	F-2
Woodworking	F-1	H-2 (when exceeding quantities in Table 3-D)	H-2 >3000 sf	H-2 >3000 sf	E-3	E-3
Factory industrial uses that involve the fabrication or manufacturing of noncombustible materials which during finishing, packing or processing do not involve a significant fire hazard.	F-2	F-2	B-4	B-4	G	G
Buildings and structures which contain materials that present a detonation hazard.	H-1	H-1	H-1	H-1	E-1	E-1
Buildings and structures which contain materials that present a deflagration hazard or a hazard from accelerated burning.	H-2	H-2	H-2	H-2	E-2	E-2
Buildings and structures that contain materials that readily support combustion or present a physical hazard.	H-3	H-3	H-3			
Buildings and structures which contain materials that are health hazards.	H-4	H-7	H-7			
Semiconductor fabrication facilities and comparable research and development areas in which hazardous production materials (HPM) are used and the aggregate quantity of materials is in excess of those listed in Tables 307.7(1) and 307.7(2).	H-5	H-6	H-6			
This occupancy shall include buildings, structures or parts thereof housing more than 16 persons, on a 24-hour basis, who because of age, mental disability or other reasons, live in a supervised residential environment that provides personal care services. The occupants are capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff.	I-1	I-1.1	I-1	R-1 I-2 more than 20	D-3	D-3



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Description of Occupancy						
This occupancy shall include buildings and structures that are inhabited by more than five persons who are under restraint or security. An I-3 facility is occupied by persons who are generally incapable of self-preservation due to security measures not under the occupants' control.	I-3	I-3	I-3	I-3	D-1	D-1
This group shall include buildings and structures occupied by persons of any age who receive custodial care for less than 24 hours by individuals other than parents or guardians, relatives by blood, marriage or adoption, and in a place other than the home of the person cared for.	I-4					
Mercantile Group M occupancy includes, among others, buildings and structures or a portion thereof, for the display and sale of merchandise, and involves stocks of goods, wares or merchandise incidental to such purposes and accessible to the public.	M	B-2	B-2	B-2	F-2	F-2
Motor fuel-dispensing facility	M	S-3	B-1	B-1	F-1	F-1
Residential occupancies where the occupants are primarily transient in nature.	R-1	R-1	R-1	R-1	H	H
Residential occupancies containing sleeping units or more than two dwelling units where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature.	R-2	R-1	R-1	R-1	H	H
Residential occupancies where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature and not classified as R-1, R-2, R-4 or I and where buildings do not contain more than two dwelling units as applicable in Section 101.2, or adult and child care facilities that provide accommodations for five or fewer persons of any age for less than 24 hours.	R-3	R-3	R-3	R-3	I	I
Residential occupancies shall include buildings arranged for occupancy as residential care/assisted living facilities including more than five but not more than 16 occupants, excluding staff.	R-4	LC	R-4	R-1		
Buildings occupied for storage uses which are not classified as Group S-2.	S-1	S-1	B-2	B-2	F-2	F-2



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Vehicle & marine repair garage	S-1	H-4 major, S-3 minor	H-4 major, B-1 minor	H-4 major, B-1 minor	E-4 major, F-1 minor	E-4 major, F-1 minor
Includes, among others, buildings used for the storage of noncombustible materials such as products on wood pallets or in paper cartons with or without single thickness divisions; or in paper wrappings. Such products are permitted to have a negligible amount of plastic trim, such as knobs, handles or film wrapping.	S-2	S-2	B-4	B-4	G	G
Parking Garage	S-2	S-3 enclosed, S-4 open	B-1 enclosed, B-3 open	B-1 enclosed, B-3 open	F-1 enclosed, F-3 open	F-1 enclosed, F-3 open
Buildings and structures of an accessory character and miscellaneous structures not classified in any specific occupancy shall be constructed, equipped and maintained to conform to the requirements of this code commensurate with the fire and life hazard incidental to their occupancy.	U	U-1 U-2	M-1 M-2	M-1 M-2	J-1 J-2	J-1 J-2 J-3

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/sdci/about-us/who-we-are/applicant-services-center>