

CHANGE TYPE: Clarification

CHANGE SUMMARY: It has been clarified that occupied roofs are to be assigned one or more occupancy classifications in a manner consistent with the classification of uses inside the building, based upon the fire and life safety hazards posed by the rooftop activities.

2018 CODE: 302.1 General: Occupancy classification. Occupancy classification is the formal designation of the primary purpose of the building, structure or portion thereof. Structures or portions of structures shall be classified with respect to occupancy in into one or more of the occupancy groups listed in this section based on the nature of the hazards and risks to building occupants generally associated with the intended purpose of the building or structure. A An area, room or space that is intended to be occupied at different times for different purposes shall comply with all of the applicable requirements that are applicable to each of the purposes for which the room or space will be occupied associated with such potential multipurpose. Structures with multiple occupancies or uses containing multiple occupancy groups shall comply with Section 508. Where a structure is proposed for a purpose that is not specifically provided for in this code listed in this section, such structure shall be classified in the group that the occupancy it most nearly resembles according to based on the fire safety and relative hazard involved. Occupied roofs shall be classified in the group that the occupancy most nearly resembles, according to the fire safety and relative hazard, and shall comply with Section 503.1.4.

CHANGE SIGNIFICANCE: The initial step in analyzing a building for compliance with the IBC is to determine the appropriate occupancy classification for each area of the building based upon its use. Such determination can be done on a room-by-room basis or, in a more global sense,

302.1 continues



Rooftop restaurant

302.1

Classification of Outdoor Areas

302.1 continued

by reviewing multiple spaces as a single use. However, the code has historically been silent in regard to the occupancy classification of occupied roofs. Chapter 10 regulating the means of egress, along with Chapter 11 addressing accessibility, contains references to the application of its provisions to occupied roofs. However, there has been no specific mention as to the proper means to classify such spaces based upon their use. It has been clarified that occupied roofs are to be assigned one or more occupancy classifications in a manner consistent with the classification of uses inside the building, based upon the fire and life safety hazards posed by the rooftop activities.

The IBC is considered as an “occupancy-based” code, where the primary difference in requirements between buildings is due to the varying uses that are anticipated. As such, it is critical that an occupancy classification be assigned to any occupied portion of a building in order that the appropriate fire and life safety criteria are applied. For example, where a rooftop contains a restaurant having dining seating for 50 or more persons, the occupied roof would be classified as a Group A-2 occupancy in order to address those hazards associated with such an assembly use. The determination of the occupancy classification, or classifications, of an occupied roof would be performed in a manner consistent with the classification of uses inside the building.



This excerpt is taken from *Significant Changes to the International Building Code®*, 2018 Edition.

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