

Classification of Multiple Dwelling Units

Constructed with Common Building Elements Policy

Purpose: To clarify occupancy group classification, permit activity types and applicable disabled access codes for dwelling units which are constructed in clusters and which share common building elements.

Definitions:

“Single Structure”, “Structure” or “Building”: A single independent structural that does not share common element(s) with other structures. For the purposes of scoping for disabled access requirements and building permit type, a dwelling unit which has building envelope elements connected to one or more adjacent dwelling units may be considered a single independent structure if **ALL** of the following apply:

1. Each dwelling unit under consideration must independently comply with all applicable code standards, including structural independence, without reliance on any adjacent unit(s).
2. Exterior building envelope elements between dwelling units are limited to removable closure strips or flashings only.
3. It is readily achievable, as determined by the Building Official, to remove any dwelling unit or units in the cluster, without affecting the integrity of any of the other unit(s).

Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

Single Family Dwelling: A building containing a single dwelling unit.

“Two-Family Dwelling” or “Duplex”: A building containing two dwelling units within a single parcel of land.

Half-Plex: A building containing two dwelling units, each located on a separate parcel of land.

“Townhouse” or “Townhome”: A single family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from the foundation to roof and with a yard or public way on not less than two sides.

Closure Strip: Construction material such as, but not limited to, metal flashing bearing no structural significance, and which has no other purpose than the prevention of weather, debris or other deleterious materials from entering gaps between two closely spaced structures.

Disabled Access Scoping for R-3 Occupancies:

Per the California Residential Code (CRC), section R320.1; *“Dwelling units in a building consisting of three or more dwelling units or four or more condominium units shall meet the requirements of the California Building Code (CBC) Chapter 11A”* (Housing Accessibility). The inclusion of this code section within the CRC clarifies the requirement that Townhouses, by definition, are considered “Covered Multi-Family Dwellings” and **ARE** subject to the disabled access provisions of CBC, Chapter 11A.

All other privately funded, occupancy group R-3 structures which are not subject to CBC, section 11B- 233 are exempt from disabled access requirements.