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Technical

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Purpose: This document provides a general guide for the occupancy classification of incidental use areas and accessory occupancies.

Related Code Section(s): BC 503 (Table)
BC 508.2
BC 508.3
BC 601 (Table)
BC 602 (Table)
BC 704
BC 803.5 (Table)
BC 804
BC 1004.1.2 (Table)
BC 1607.1 (Table)

Subject(s): Incidental Use Areas; Accessory Occupancies

The charts on page 2 of this document were developed to assist 2008 code users in understanding the occupancy classifications of incidental use areas and accessory occupancies as they relate to egress, fire separations, and other code topics.

How to Treat Incidental Use Areas and Accessory Occupancies in the 2008 Code

The chart below illustrates when to use the occupancy classification of an incidental use area or an accessory area, and when to use the occupancy classification of its main occupancy (the occupancy to which the area is incidental or the occupancy of the fire area in which an accessory occupancy is located).

Code Topic & Section ⁱⁱⁱ	Incidental Use Area ⁱ		Accessory Occupancy ⁱⁱ (no separation provided)	
	Use the Incidental Use Area's Occupancy Classification	Use its Main Occupancy Classification	Use the Accessory Area's Occupancy Classification	Use its Main Occupancy Classification
Fire Protection Requirements (508.2.1.1; 508.2.3; 508.3.1; 403; Chapter 9)		X	Apply the most restrictive occupancy classification to the fire area	
Egress (Chapter 10)		X	X	
Occupant Load (1004)	Occupant Load shall be based on actual use of space (not occupancy classification)			
Exterior Wall Ratings (Tables 601 and 602; 704)		X	X	
Live Loads (Chapter 16)		X	X	
Interior Finishes (Chapter 8)		X	X	

The chart below explains how fire separations and building area and height limits are handled for incidental use areas and accessory occupancies.

Code Topic	Incidental Use Area ⁱ	Accessory Occupancy ⁱⁱ
Fire Separations	Separate or protect, or both, from all other occupancies in accordance with Table 508.2	No separation is required between an accessory occupancy and its main occupancy (508.3.1.3)
Building Area and Height Limits	Treat as being in the same occupancy group as its main occupancy for the purposes of calculating allowable building height and area (508.2.1.2)	Step 1: Treat as being in the same occupancy group as its main occupancy for the purposes of calculating allowable building height and area (508.3.1.2, first sentence); Step 2: Treat as being in its own occupancy group to check the accessory occupancy's tabular limits per Table 503 (508.3.1.2, second sentence).

ⁱ Incidental use areas within and serving a dwelling unit are not required to comply with Section 508.2.

ⁱⁱ Rooms or spaces within Groups H-2, H-3, H-4 or H-5 occupancy shall not be considered accessory occupancies and shall be treated as separate occupancies in accordance with Section 508.3.3.

ⁱⁱⁱ These charts are meant as general guides; topics and section references are not intended to be comprehensive or to represent the entire code.