

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT POLICY/ORDINANCE
INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation No.: RES-BDRM-01
Effective Date: 12/05/05
Originally Issued: replaces written interpretation on “Bedroom” definition handout

Question:

What is the standard for meeting the “opening off” provision in the Bedroom definition?

**Applicable Ordinance Section(s)
And/or General Plan/LUP Policy(ies)**
13.10.700-B

INTERPRETATION:

A room in a residential structure shall be considered to be “opening off” of another room if the rooms share a common wall that provides a passageway that meets or exceeds the minimum 30” net clear width and minimum 6’8” height doorway dimensions of the Uniform Building Code. Examples include a 2’8” x 6’8” door or 2’6” x 6’8” pocket door. An actual door is not required.

Reason:

The definition of “Bedroom” in the County Code is worded such that all rooms are considered bedrooms unless they meet the listed exceptions criteria. This strict language is necessary as the determination of the number of bedrooms in a habitable structure triggers regulations for parking, septic tank sizing, egress windows, and payment of Capital Improvement fees.

The exception criteria includes a series of rooms -- dining room, family room, breakfast nook, and closet/dressing room -- that must “open off” of certain other rooms in order to not be considered bedrooms. This design and location criteria allows these legitimate ancillary rooms to not be labeled as bedrooms and discourages their conversion.

There is no County Code definition of “opening off”; therefore, it is reasonable to require that these rooms share a common wall and provide a passageway to the primary room (such as a dressing room and a master bedroom). This passageway must meet or exceed the minimum Uniform Building Code requirements for a doorway in order to be wheelchair accessible.

Tom Burns, Planning Director

Date