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Building / Fire Policy for Live / Work Units

Live / Work occupancies – Defined.

Group LW occupancies shall be: Live / work and work / live uses located outside of residential zoning districts where artists, artisans and similarly situated individuals occupy joint living and work quarters. When the combined live and work area within a unit exceeds 1500 square feet such unit shall be classified by the building official as a work/live occupancy and shall be included in the B/M/F occupancy group use most nearly resembles as set forth in Chapter 3 of the California Building Code. When the combined live and work area within a unit is 1500 square feet or less such unit shall be classified as live/work R occupancy under the CBC.

1. General Requirements.

1. Any building which contains a live/work or work/live occupancy shall comply with the latest edition of the CBC except as provided for herein. Each live/work and work/live occupancy shall comply with the standards of habitability set forth in the California Building Code.
2. Buildings or parts of buildings containing live/work or work/live occupancies shall be equipped with fire sprinklers and fire alarms designed and installed in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 9 of the latest edition of the CBC, the latest edition of the California Fire Code (CFC) and other application regulations of the Fire Department, which may vary, depending upon the use, size of the structure and the location of the structure.
3. Live/work or work/live units shall be separated from each other and from the rest of the building by not less than one-hour fire resistive occupancy separations. An occupancy separation is not required between the work and live areas within the unit.

2. Living Space and Accessory Uses. Any workroom or area within a live/work unit shall be deemed an accessory use to the primary residential occupancy. Any residential area within a work/live unit shall be deemed an accessory to the primary non-residential occupancy. In no case shall there be less than 120 square feet of living area exclusive of kitchen, bath, closets and hallways in any live/work occupancy. For the purposes of calculating this 120 square foot requirement, the living room, dining room, family room, sleeping area or other area designated for a similar use of a residential nature shall be deemed as living area. All other habitable rooms except kitchens shall have an area of not less than 70 square feet. Single room residential areas (efficiency dwelling units) shall comply with the requirements of CBC Section 310.7.

3. Electrical, Mechanical, and Plumbing Requirements. Except as otherwise stated herein, all electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work in any building which contains any live/work or work/live occupancies shall satisfy the latest edition of the California Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical Codes as amended by the Petaluma Municipal Code.

- 4. Energy Conservation.** Buildings or parts of buildings containing live/work or work/live occupancies shall comply with the Title 24 energy efficiency standards for residential buildings, unless otherwise determined by the building official.

Exception: Where an occupancy separation within an individual unit is installed between live and work areas, the Title 24 energy standards for the respective occupancies may apply.

5. Disabled Access.

1. Buildings with three or more work/live or live/work units shall comply with the residential disabled access requirements of Chapter 11A of the CBC.
2. Regardless of the number of units, any area within work/live or live/work occupancies, where such area is available for use by clients, employees or the general public, shall in addition comply with commercial disabled access requirements of the most recent edition of the CBC.

Exception: In lieu of an accessible public restroom in each work/live or live/work unit, fully accessible restroom facilities may be provided in common areas located on an accessible route of travel within a reasonable distance of the accessible units.

3. Any live/work or work/live occupancies shall also comply with the accessibility requirements of the California, Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical Codes.

6. Occupancy Requirements, Exiting, and Area Separations.

1. Any building or part of building, which contains one or more work/live occupancies, shall satisfy the following requirements.
 - a) Any building or part of building shall comply with the applicable provisions of the CBC requirements for the respective occupancy group, as defined by CBC Section 301.
 - b) The living area of each unit containing any work/live occupancy shall be provided with at least one exit, which does not require persons to exit through the work area.
2. Any building or part of building which contains live/work occupancies shall satisfy the following requirements:
 - a) Building or part of building containing one or two live/work units shall comply with the requirements for R-3 occupancy.
 - b) Building or part of building containing three or more live/work units shall comply with the requirements for R-1 occupancy.
3. Any building containing floor area in excess of 10,000 square feet shall be permitted if and only they are subdivided with area separation walls into portions of no more than 10,000 square feet in accordance with Section 504.6 of the most recent edition of the CBC.

Exception: Such area separation walls shall not be required in buildings where fire sprinklers are required pursuant to Section 19.28.130(A) and not required by any other provisions of this code or the Uniform Fire Code.
4. Buildings, which contain both live/work and work/live occupancies shall comply with the most restrictive applicable requirements of CFC Section 19.28.130(F) 1 and 2 above.

- 7. Mixed uses and other uses in live/work.** Mixed use occupancies shall be classified by the building official in accordance with this code and shall comply with all of the requirements of this code including, but not limited to, occupancy separation, allowable area and independent exits as required by this code of the proposed occupancy.

- 8. Relationship to other code requirements.** Except with respect to those requirements, standards and provisions specifically imposed by this policy, construction materials and methods of construction shall be governed by and in accordance with the CBC. In the event there is a conflict between any requirement, standard or provision imposed by this policy and any other provision, standard or requirement of state law, the more restrictive standard shall apply.