

Organized Camp Occupancy - Group C

California-specific occupancy - 2025 California Building Code §314 and §450

Purpose. California uses Group C for organized camps. This is a California-specific occupancy classification and is not one of the standard occupancy groups in the model IBC list.

1. What Qualifies as Group C

An organized camp is a site with programs and facilities established primarily to provide an outdoor group-living experience with social, spiritual, educational or recreational objectives for five days or more during one or more seasons of the year.

Group C classification applies to the organized-camp use as regulated by California provisions. Individual buildings and facilities within a camp can also have specialized requirements based on their function.

Code reference: 2025 CBC §314.1

2. Common Organized Camp Components

- Sleeping cabins, dormitory-style structures and staff housing.
- Dining halls and commercial cooking areas.
- Assembly, recreation and activity buildings.
- Medical/first-aid spaces, maintenance buildings and storage structures.
- Outdoor program areas, campfire areas and temporary structures.
- Roads, emergency vehicle access, water supplies and remote-area fire-protection features.

3. Special California Requirements

- CBC §450 contains special detailed provisions for Group C organized camps.
- California Fire Code requirements apply to fire department access, fire protection systems, open flames, vegetation, hazardous materials, fuel-gas systems and other fire hazards as applicable.
- Health and licensing requirements can apply in addition to the building/fire code. Occupancy classification does not replace camp licensing or public-health requirements.
- Wildland-urban interface and Fire Safe Regulations can be important where the camp is located in a State Responsibility Area or other applicable fire-hazard area.

Code reference: 2025 CBC §450; 2025 CFC; CCR Title 14 where applicable

4. Fire & Life-Safety Review Considerations

- Verify the actual use of each room, tenant space and outdoor/rooftop area; a building can contain more than one occupancy group.
- Determine occupant load and means-of-egress requirements under CBC Chapter 10.
- Evaluate automatic sprinkler and fire alarm requirements under CBC/CFC Chapter 9.
- Check allowable building height/area, construction type and occupancy separation requirements under CBC Chapters 5 through 7.
- Maintain required fire department access, water supply, addressing, key-box access and fire protection equipment access as applicable.
- Changes in use or occupancy can trigger a new code analysis even when little or no construction work is proposed.
- Remote sites should be reviewed early for apparatus access, turnaround, bridge/load limits, emergency addressing, water supply, evacuation planning and vegetation hazards.

Code reference: 2025 CBC Chapters 5-10; 2025 CFC Chapters 5, 9 and applicable occupancy/hazard chapters

Primary References

References: 2025 California Building Code §314 - Organized Camps Group C; 2025 California Building Code §450 - Group C; 2025 California Fire Code §203.13 - Organized Camps Group C; California Health and Safety / public-health requirements applicable to organized camps

Final requirements depend on the actual use, occupant load, building size and construction, mixed occupancies, hazardous materials and fire-protection systems. The fire/building code official makes the final occupancy-classification determination.