

Residential Occupancy - Group R

2025 California Building Code §310 - Residential and care-facility classifications

Purpose. Group R covers sleeping/residential uses that are not Institutional Group I and are not otherwise regulated solely by the California Residential Code. California includes several residential care classifications beyond the model-code basics.

1. Residential Subclassifications

Code reference: 2025 CBC §§310.2-310.5

Group	General use	Representative examples
R-1	Primarily transient sleeping	Hotels, motels and transient boarding/congregate residences
R-2	Primarily permanent multi-unit / sleeping	Apartments, dormitories, live/work units, nontransient lodging and qualifying child care
R-2.1	24-hour supervised residential environment with personal care	Assisted living, RCFE and similar licensed care; may include nonambulatory/bedridden clients
R-2.2	CDCR only	Specified community-located CDCR residential facilities
R-3	Primarily permanent, lower-density residential uses	One- and two-family-type uses, small boarding/congregate uses, certain day care/care facilities
R-3.1	Licensed 24-hour residential care for six or fewer clients	Small licensed residential care/RCFE uses, including specified nonambulatory/bedridden clients
R-4	Supervised custodial care for more than six and not more than 16 clients	Assisted living, group homes and similar qualifying care uses

2. Key California Classification Issues

- Group I-1 is not used in the 2025 CBC; many supervised residential-care occupancies are classified under R-2.1.
- R-3.1 is a California-specific classification important for licensed 24-hour care facilities with six or fewer clients.
- R-2.2 is limited to specified CDCR community-located facilities.
- A care facility classification depends on number of clients, whether care is 24-hour, ambulatory/nonambulatory/bedridden status, type of care and licensing category.
- Some R-3 buildings can be designed under the California Residential Code; others remain under the CBC based on the specific use and code path.

Code reference: 2025 CBC §§310.3.1, 310.3.2, 310.4 and 310.4.1

3. Fire/Life-Safety Review Items

- Automatic residential or commercial sprinkler system requirements based on occupancy and code path.
- Smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detection and fire alarm systems as applicable.
- Sleeping-room emergency escape and rescue openings where required.
- Care-facility staff response, evacuation capability, door locking and special provisions under CBC §435.
- Separation of garages, utility spaces and mixed occupancies.
- Fire department access, addressing and water supply for residential development.

4. Additional Classification Review

- Verify the actual use of each sleeping, care and accessory space; a residential building can contain mixed occupancies.
- Determine occupant load, means of egress, allowable building size/construction and required occupancy separations.
- Changes in resident population, licensing, care level or use can change the occupancy classification and required fire-protection features.

Code reference: 2025 CBC Chapters 3, 5-10; 2025 CFC applicable residential provisions

Primary References

References: 2025 California Building Code §310 - Residential Group R; 2025 CBC §§420 and 435 - residential/care-facility special provisions; 2025 California Fire Code residential occupancy provisions; 2025 California Residential Code where applicable

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.