

Definition of a Bedroom

Within today's custom homes it is not uncommon to see exercise rooms, sewing rooms, studies, offices, dens, family rooms and other similarly labeled non-bedroom spaces shown on residential house plans. However, these same rooms can and are used as bedrooms when a family grows or the house is sold to another family which has different needs. To make sure the home is served by a sewage disposal system which is sized properly, the system must be based on the potential number of bedrooms in the house.

There are certain standards by which a room can be deemed a potential bedroom. They provide:

1. A defined habitable space per Building Code requirements. The exception to this statement would pertain to obvious future habitable space (such as an unfinished second floor in a "cape" style home) which has the appropriate structural shell but has not been "finished" to meet Building Code standards for habitable space.
2. Privacy to the occupants.
3. Full bathroom facilities (containing either a bathtub or shower) which are conveniently located to the bedroom served.
4. Entry from a common area, not through a room already deemed a bedroom.

Consideration should be given to the number of rooms in a new dwelling which may be used as bedrooms, even though the builder may not intend to use them as such. This is particularly true for homes built on speculation, since the builder has no control over who purchases the dwelling. Generally, all rooms on the second floor of a two story house, except for the bathroom and hallway, are considered bedrooms. Two bedroom houses are allowed by the Public Health Code. However, such buildings would be expected to be relatively small in total floor area. Any new dwelling containing over six rooms or 1500 square feet normally should be served by a sewage disposal system suitable for a three bedroom house.

A significant number of homes are being constructed with habitable space above a two or three car garage. This space may be accessible from either the first or second floors or both. They are typically labeled as second floor playrooms or bonus rooms, may be quite large in area and have the potential to be a bedroom. Using the above criteria, this space should be deemed a bedroom when access is from the second floor and a full bathroom is readily available. The same designation would apply if access were provided from both the second and first floor. It would not be designated a bedroom if the only way to gain access to this second floor room were perhaps from a first floor stairway when the first floor does not have a full bathroom facility access is from the garage.