



TO: Development Services Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 127**
Determining Occupant Load

DATE: October 9, 2006
Revised February 21, 2012/May 28, 2015

CREATED BY: Plan Review Division

Purpose:

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) created this **revised** bulletin to update IB 127 to assist customers with determining occupant load with the International Building Code (IBC). Section 1004 of the IBC lists requirements for determination of the occupant load of a building/space. The occupant load is used to determine design requirements such as occupancy classification, means of egress, required fire protection systems, etc.

Scope:

Per Section 1004.1.2, the minimum occupant load for areas without fixed seating is determined by dividing the floor area under consideration by the applicable ‘occupant per unit of area factor’ listed in Table 1004.1.2. However, Section 1004.1.2 includes the following exception:

Where approved by the building official, the actual number of occupants for whom each occupied space, floor or building is designed, although less than those determined by calculation, shall be permitted to be used in the determination of the design occupant load.

The intent of this exception is to allow the building official to review and evaluate unusual design conditions on a case-by-case basis. Where a customer wishes to utilize this exception in their design, the customer is required to submit a written proposal, in letter format, to a Development Services Engineer for review at the address below. The proposal is required to

- 1) describe the intended use of the building or space,
- 2) clearly indicate the calculated occupant load using Table 1004.1.2,
- 3) clearly indicate the proposed occupant load, and

4) include an explanation regarding why the calculation method prescribed in Section 1004.1.2 and Table 1004.1.2 is not appropriate or applicable to the particular design.

Include any drawings with building or space layout with any fixed or proposed seating to support the proposed occupant load. If a permit application is already submitted to the City, reference to the permit number is adequate so that the submitted plans may be reviewed as part of the analysis/determination of the request. A reason why the increased or reduced occupant load is requested is helpful. (Example: proposed reduction to decrease plumbing fixtures, to not provide a sprinkler system, to not provide an additional interior/exterior stairwell, no room to provide a second required exit from a space, existing stairwells support the proposed additional occupant loads, etc.....)

If the request is prepared by the registered design professional, it is required to be countersigned by the owner.

Development Service Engineers shall review the proposal and determine whether it is approved or denied and shall respond to the proposal in writing. The estimated turnaround time for review and action is ten (10) business days. Should the customer be dissatisfied with the ruling taken on the request, the customer may appeal the ruling to the Building-related and Fire Code Appeals and Advisory Board in accordance with Chapter 10 of the City codes.

If you have any questions regarding this Information Bulletin, please contact the Plan Review Staff at DSDPlansManagement@sanantonio.gov or by calling (210) 207-4408.

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Summary:

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

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