



MEMORANDUM COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: December 4, 2018
From: Jennifer Kester, Planning Manager
Subject: Single-Family Dwelling Definition and Occupant Load

A question was posed to the City Council regarding what constitutes a single-family dwelling and how many people can occupy a single-family dwelling.

Answer: A single-family dwelling is a unit that contains living facilities for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation for one (1) family. It may be detached as in a residential subdivision or attached as in an apartment complex. A family can be an unlimited number of people related to each other by genetics, adoption, or marriage. A family can also be up to 5 unrelated people living together. A single-family dwelling needs to provide 200sf of living space for each member of the family. For example, a 5-member family must have a dwelling of at least 1,000sf. If a single-family dwelling houses people with a disability, as defined by the American with Disabilities Act, the city is allowed to accommodate that disability by allowing more than 5 unrelated people as one family. The 200sf of living space per individual standard would still apply.

Code References:

SMC 15.105.040 "D" Definitions

Dwelling Unit

Any building or portion thereof which contains living facilities, including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation for not more than one (1) family.

Dwelling Unit, Detached

A dwelling unit that is not attached to any other dwelling unit by any means.

SMC 15.105.060 "F" Definitions

Family

An individual or two (2) or more persons related by genetics, marriage, or adoption, or a group of not more than five (5) persons who need not be related by genetics or marriage, living together in a dwelling unit.

2012 International Building Code

Table 1004.1.2 provides that the minimum floor area allowance per occupant is 200 gross square feet for any residential use.

SMC 15.465.200 Accommodation of Persons with Disabilities

A. Purpose. The City recognizes the need to make reasonable exceptions to its Zoning Code, if requested, to accommodate the special needs of persons with disabilities.

B. Application. Such exceptions may include:

1. Increasing the number of nonrelated persons allowed to live together in a single-family house