



**SIERRA COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING**  
P.O BOX 530  
Downieville, California 95936  
(530) 289-3251 FAX (530) 289-2828  
[building@sierracounty.ca.gov](mailto:building@sierracounty.ca.gov)

**FORM NUMBER**

**BD-18**

**BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR  
CHANGE IN USE OR OCCUPANCY**

**THIS CHECKLIST IS PROVIDED TO ASSIST BOTH YOU AND STAFF TO HELP IN THE REVIEW AND PROCESSING OF YOUR PERMIT. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!** *Construction Plans and supporting documentation shall be of sufficient detail and clarity to indicate the location, nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of the California Building Standards Codes and relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, as determined by the Building Official (CRC R106.1.1, CBC 107.2.1).*

**REF: 2025 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODES & SIERRA COUNTY CODE-PART 12**

Every building is classified by the Building Official according to its use or occupancy as a building of Group A, B, C, E, F, H, I, L, M, R, S, or U type as defined in the 2025 California Building Code (CBC). Building permit records or past approved plans may be used to identify or establish legally existing occupancies. Any occupancy about which there is any question shall be classified by the Building Official and included in the group that it most clearly resembles, based on the existing life-safety and fire hazard (including outdated classification types).

A change of occupancy classification or use of any building requires approval of the Building Official. No change shall be made in the character of occupancies or use of any building unless such building is made to comply with all current code requirements (CBC Section 105.1, 111.1). The basis for this requirement is to provide for a higher level of safety to the occupants due to the anticipated intensification of use caused by the change in occupancy.

The change of occupancy must also be in conformance with the land use requirements of the zoning ordinance (Part 15 of the Sierra County Code). Please consult the Planning Department to determine if the proposed use is compatible with the current zoning, and whether a discretionary entitlement may be required (such as a Conditional Use Permit or Zone Change).

***A qualified design professional is required to submit a code analysis report and two (2) sets of prepared plans which will identify existing conditions and proposed alterations (if any) necessary to bring the building into full code compliance for the intended use or occupancy. The completeness and accuracy of the report is essential for staff to determine the extent of alterations required to accomplish the change in use. A code analysis report shall include, but may not be limited to, the following issues:***

- Floor plan of every floor/story/space showing *existing and proposed* use or occupancy under CBC Chapter 3; as well as square footage of each space (for mixed occupancies), and of the whole building. (Note: a plot plan is required if there are any proposed exterior improvements including: driveway or parking, additions, ADA ramps, decks/stairs, HVAC equipment, LPG tank, or septic system improvements.)
- Conformity with Zoning.
- A specific proposal that includes alterations required for the building to meet applicable Building Code requirements, and the valuation of the work (including both labor and materials).

- ❑ Type of construction pursuant to requirements of CBC Chapter 6.
- ❑ Fire resistance of exterior wall opening protection based on proximity to property lines pursuant to requirements of CBC Chapters 5 & 7.
- ❑ Allowable floor area, allowable maximum height, maximum number of stories permitted, and automatic fire-sprinkler requirements pursuant to requirements of CBC Chapters 5 & 9.
- ❑ Conformity with required means of egress pursuant to CBC Chapter 10.
- ❑ Conformity with State accessibility requirements pursuant to CBC Chapter 11A or B.
- ❑ Compliance with minimum number of restroom facilities and number of plumbing fixtures pursuant to CPC Chapter 4 & Table 422.1.
- ❑ Any proposed changes in serving utilities (electric, phone, LPG, water, PRC 4290 Fire Suppression Water System).
- ❑ Septic system capacity and proposed capacity improvements to accommodate the change in use.
- ❑ Compliance with the County’s Flood Plain Management ordinance (Part 32 of the Sierra County Code), if applicable.
- ❑ Structural Analysis: When a change of occupancy results in a structure being reclassified to a higher risk category; or if the Building Official determines that there is an overall increase in hazard to life, limb, health, property or public welfare; or if no records exist of the structural integrity or design of the existing structure, it shall be demonstrated that the structure will conform to the minimum design load requirements (including: seismic, wind, and snow load requirements) for a new structure of the higher risk category. In general, the order of least-hazardous group to highest hazardous group is as follows:
  - Group U [least hazardous group]
  - Group R-3 and R-3.1
  - Group S-2
  - Group B, F, L, M, H and S-1
  - Group R-1, R-2, R-2.1 and R-4
  - Group A, E and I [highest hazardous group]

A copy of the current edition of the California Building Standards Codes (including CBC Chapter 3 on Use and Occupancy Classification) is available for viewing at the Building Department; or for purchase at: [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org); or may be viewed online here: <http://www.bsc.ca.gov/Codes.aspx>

Permit applications and plan submittal requirement handouts are available at the Building Department counter and online at: [www.sierracounty.ca.gov](http://www.sierracounty.ca.gov) → Your Government → Planning and Building → Forms & Policies.