

CODE APPLICATION NOTICE

Subject: Occupancy Classification for Passenger
Drop-Off and Loading Zones

CAN NO. 2-1109B.2
EFFECTIVE: 8/19/09

CODE SECTIONS

Sections 508.2.1 and 1109B
2007 California Building Code (CBC)

2007 California Building Code

1109B.1 General. *All Group I occupancies shall be accessible as provided in this chapter...*

...

1109B.2 Entrance. *At least one accessible entrance shall be protected from the weather by canopy or roof overhang. Such entrances shall incorporate a passenger loading zone. ...*

...

508.2.1 Occupancy Classification. An incidental use area shall be classified in accordance with the occupancy of that portion of the building in which it is located or the building shall be classified as a mixed occupancy and shall comply with Section 508.3.

...

**Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language,
Unabridged**

DEFINITION

PORTE COCHERE a roofed structure extending from the entrance of a building over an adjacent driveway and sheltering those getting in or out of vehicles.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code Application Notice is to identify the occupancy classification for passenger drop-off and loading zones, also known as "porte cocheres", as required by CBC Section 1109B.2 and are immediately adjacent to health facilities.

BACKGROUND

The occupancy requirements for a covered passenger drop-off (porte cochere) are not clearly defined in the California Building Code. In the past OSHPD has treated these areas as “Open Parking Garages” since this is the occupancy that the use most nearly resembles. Previous editions of the California Building Code did not require an occupancy separation between hospitals and parking areas that were considered open parking garages as long as there was sufficient “openness” along the perimeter of the drop-off area.

INTERPRETATION

CBC Section 508.2.1 provides two different approaches for classifying covered passenger drop-off and loading zones (porte cocheres):

1) A porte cochere may be considered an incidental use area and classified in accordance with the occupancy of that portion of the building in which it is located or contiguous to. If the porte cochere is designed as an incidental use area, the occupancy classification and construction type is considered to be the same as the building to which it is attached and no separation is required between the porte cochere and the building. The building automatic sprinkler system must provide protection for the porte cochere. NFPA 13-2002, Section 8.14.7.2 is not applicable to incidental use areas as they are considered to be a part of the building.

2) The building may be classified as a mixed occupancy. In this case, the occupancy that a porte cochere most nearly resembles is a low-hazard storage occupancy such as an open parking garage or Group S-2 occupancy. CBC Section 508, Table 508.3.3 requires a 2-hour fire barrier separation between I and S-2 occupancies. However, footnote “c” of Table 508.3.3 states, “*Areas used for private or pleasure vehicles shall be allowed to reduce the separation by 1 hour.*” For the purpose of this reduction, private or pleasure vehicles shall be restricted to passenger vehicles and shall not include delivery trucks/vans, ambulances or other commercial vehicles. In accordance with NFPA 13-2002, Section 8.14.7.2 state that sprinklers are permitted to be omitted where the porte cochere is of noncombustible or limited combustible construction. Parking areas and loading/unloading areas for delivery trucks/vans, ambulances or other commercial vehicles shall be classified as an S-2 occupancy and separated from the adjacent use in accordance with CBC Section 508.3.3. The reduction allowed in footnote “c” of Table 508.3.3 would not be applicable. These areas must be protected by the building sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13-2002, Section 8.14.7.1.

Combustible materials are permitted in the applications and in accordance with CBC Sections 603.1. When a porte cochere is constructed as an incidental use area or as a required means of egress from a Group I-2 occupancy, light-transmitting plastics in wall and roof panels are prohibited in accordance with CBC Sections 2607.1, 2609.1 and 1004.9.

Regardless of an “incidental” or a “mixed occupancy” approach, if the passenger drop-off and loading zone also serves as part of the means of egress from the building, in accordance with CBC Section 1004.9, the porte cochere must be protected by automatic fire sprinklers. In addition, to minimize the accumulation of smoke and toxic gases, the porte cochere shall be sufficiently open to the exterior in accordance with CBC Section 1024.4.

If a vehicle can park under or drive through the roof overhang area (porte cochere), it is not considered a “canopy” as defined in CBC Section 202 and therefore, CBC Section 3105 “Awnings and Canopies” does not apply.

Original Signed

8/19/09

Paul Coleman

Date