



Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

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STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 14-22

CODE: 2012 International Building Code

SECTION: 1208.3 Room Area; 1208.4 Efficiency Dwelling Units

QUESTION 1: IBC Section 1208.3 states that *dwelling units* contain at least one room of 120 sq. ft. net area and that all other habitable rooms be of at least 70 sq. ft. net area. Assuming that all features required in a legal *dwelling* are present, is there a requirement to have habitable rooms in addition to the single required 120 sq. ft. room? More specifically, can the required provisions of living, sleeping, eating and cooking all be contained in this one 120 sq. ft. room and does the bathroom have to be in a separate room or area?

QUESTION 2: IBC Section 1208.4 provides for a minimum area of 220 sq. ft. in an "Efficiency dwelling unit." While I envision the intent of this section is what is commonly referred to as a studio apartment, there appears to be no IBC definition of the term "Efficiency dwelling unit". If a dwelling unit does not have habitable rooms other than the room of at least 120 sq. ft. net area, must that dwelling unit meet the size requirements of IBC Section 1208.4?

ANSWER: While the code does not specifically require an additional room in 1208.3, the intent of this section is to address room area where a dwelling unit has more than one habitable room. As an alternate, a single room dwelling unit can be treated as an "efficiency dwelling unit" under 1208.4 and not be required to meet the provisions of 1208.3.

SUPERSEDES: None

REQUESTED BY: City of Bellingham Building Department