

This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.

25-023

May 2025

“Bedroom” Definition for Determining Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Size

In designing an onsite wastewater treatment system, the number of bedrooms is used to determine daily flow volumes as required to appropriately size the system. For the purposes of Title 124 NAC 1, “bedroom” means any room within a dwelling that might reasonably be used as a sleeping room. In some cases, determining whether a room is a bedroom has proven difficult. The following information is provided to help determine if a room should be considered a bedroom when sizing an onsite wastewater treatment system.

NOTE: *This definition is only applicable when trying to estimate sewage flow from a dwelling. It **cannot** be used to determine the adequacy or safety of a room for sleeping purposes. For adequacy and safety requirements, refer to the International Residential Code, the Nebraska state building code, or local building codes. More stringent local ordinances may apply.*

Room Size

Rooms with a minimum floor area of 70 square feet and a minimum ceiling height of 7 feet may reasonably be used for sleeping rooms. For rooms with sloped ceilings, a minimum of 5 feet is allowed. Areas less than 5 feet in height are not included in the 70 sq. ft. minimum.

Current Room Use

A room that is currently being used as a sleeping room, even if not constructed to current code requirements, is counted as a bedroom. Other useful sources for determining whether a room is a bedroom include:

- The current or most recent real estate listing of the number of bedrooms
- The number of bedrooms listed with the local Assessor’s office
- Rooms labeled as bedrooms on the house plans
- Rooms with smoke detectors
- All rooms on the second level that are not bathrooms

Architectural Features

These are features common to designated bedrooms or rooms used as sleeping areas:

- Rooms with legal egress
- Rooms with a closet
- Rooms which are adjacent to $\frac{3}{4}$ bathrooms

Rooms such as dens, sewing rooms, exercise rooms, and home theatres should also be given serious consideration as a bedroom as they have the potential to be easily converted.

Architectural features that are obstacles to the use of a room as a sleeping room include:

- Rooms that are obviously a kitchen, bathroom, living room, dining room, laundry room, storage room (without windows), or family room
- Rooms with low ceilings
- Rooms that have half walls, arched doorways and/or no doors
- Rooms without egress to the outside
- Rooms without light or ventilation

Financial Considerations

Typically, the increase in cost of adding an additional bedroom to a system design is not exorbitant. A larger system size adds longevity and often recaptures the additional cost over the life of the system.

Sample Bedroom Determinations

The table below offers some common situations, suggestions on the bedroom determination, and reasons supporting the suggested determination. Always remember to check with local authorities to determine if they have stricter provisions in their ordinance.

Room Description	Bedroom?	Supporting reasoning
Den, exercise room, or sewing room on house plan that is $\geq 70\text{ft}^2$	Yes	Meets minimum size requirements and has no precluding architectural features
Room used as a bedroom in an existing dwelling that is $< 70\text{ft}^2$ and has no egress	Yes	Currently being used as a bedroom
Laundry room in existing dwelling that is $\geq 70\text{ft}^2$	No	Plumbing, sinks, and washer/dryer are obstacles to use a bedroom
Open loft in existing dwelling that is currently used as a bedroom	Yes	Currently being used as a bedroom
Open loft in house plan	No	“Open” is an obstacle to use as a bedroom
Open loft in existing dwelling currently used as a playroom	No	Not being used as a bedroom, and “Open” is an obstacle to use as a bedroom
Basement room $> 70\text{ft}^2$ with egress	Yes	Meets requirements of size and architectural features
Basement room $> 70\text{ft}^2$ without egress	No	Lack of egress is an obstacle to use as a bedroom