

# CHAPTER 3 USE AND OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION

## SECTION 308.3 IBC Interpretation No. 16-03 2000 Edition Issued: 07-22-03

**308.3 Group I-2.** This occupancy shall include buildings and structures used for medical, surgical, psychiatric, nursing or custodial care on a 24-hour basis of more than five persons who are not capable of self-preservation. This group shall include, but not be limited to the following: hospitals, nursing homes (both intermediate care facilities and skilled nursing facilities), mental hospitals and detoxification facilities. A facility such as the above with five or fewer persons shall be classified as a Group R-3.

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**Q1:** If the facility provides 24-hour accommodations to 10 persons, 5 of whom are not capable of self-preservation and 5 of whom are capable of responding to an emergency without assistance, is the facility classified as Group R-4?

**A1:** No. A Group R-4 Residential Care/Assisted Living is a supervised residential facility that provides care for more than 5 occupants but not more than 16 occupants, all of whom must be “capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff”. A facility that accommodates 5 or fewer such occupants is a Group R-3 occupancy, and a facility that accommodates more than 16 such occupants is a Group I-1 occupancy. A Group R-4 occupancy is not permitted to include any number of occupants that “are not capable of self-preservation”.

A facility that accommodates more than 5 persons “who are not capable of self-preservation” is classified as a Group I-2 occupancy, while a facility that accommodates 5 or less occupants “who are not capable of self-preservation” is a Group R-3 occupancy.

A Group R-3 occupancy is permitted to accommodate a maximum of 5 occupants. The occupants may be “capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff” as permitted in a Group I-1 occupancy **or** “not capable of self-preservation” as required for a Group I-2 occupancy. A facility that accommodates 5 persons who are “capable of responding to an emergency situation without physical assistance from staff,” **and** 5 persons “who are not capable of self-preservation” cannot be classified as a Group R-3 because the total occupant load of 10 persons exceeds the permitted maximum of 5 occupants.

The facility is a single occupancy; therefore, the entire facility must be assumed to be occupied by persons with the most restrictive capability when determining the occupancy classification of the facility. A facility that accommodates 10 occupants “who are not capable of self-preservation” is a Group I-2 occupancy.

**Q2:** If an existing Group R-4 facility that provides 24-hour accommodations for 10 persons is expanded to accommodate an additional 6 persons who are not capable of responding to an emergency without physical assistance, must the occupancy classification of the existing facility be changed from a Group R-4 to Group I-2?

**A2:** Yes. A facility that accommodates more than 5 occupants who are not capable of self preservation is classified as a Group I-2 occupancy. A Group R-4 facility is permitted to accommodate a maximum of 16 persons, but all of the occupants in a Group R-4 occupancy must be capable of self-preservation. The enlarged facility has an increased occupant load which includes occupants who are not capable of self preservation; therefore, the entire occupant load must be assumed to be persons with the most restrictive capability.

The existing Group R-4 facility may be expanded and retain the Group R-4 occupancy classification, but the expanded portion of the existing facility that accommodates the 6 additional occupants who are not capable of self preservation must comply with all the technical provisions for a Group I-2 occupancy. Because the existing portion of the facility is a Group R-4 occupancy and the expanded portion of the facility is a Group I-2 occupancy the entire facility must comply with the provisions for mixed occupancies.

