



TOPIC: Townhouses ORSC/2/#1 & ORSC/3/#4

CODE: Oregon Residential Specialty Code: 2017 Edition

APPROVED: August 19, 2019 [Rebecca Esau] , Director

EFFECTIVE: September 16, 2019

**REFERENCE: Oregon Residential Specialty Code
R202 Definitions, R302.2 Townhouses**

**SUBJECT: Additional Dwelling Units and Common Spaces
within Townhouse Structures**

QUESTION: Are any deviations allowed in the City of Portland from the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) definition for townhouse?

***TOWNHOUSE:** A single-family dwelling unit constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a yard or public way on not less than two sides.*

RESPONSE: Each townhouse is limited to a single-family dwelling unit that is separated from the adjacent dwelling unit by a fire wall that extends from the foundation to the roof. The Bureau of Development Services (BDS) has determined the following alternative design options are allowed.

- A.** New definition for the purpose of this code guide.
TOWNHOUSE STRUCTURE: A group of attached townhouses.
- B.** A townhouse structure may be constructed as a group of two or more attached single-family units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof.

**ORSC/2/#1 & ORSC/3/#4 Additional Dwelling Units and Common Spaces within
Townhouse Structures Page 2 of 3
September 16, 2019**

- C.** A townhouse structure may be constructed as a group of two or more attached two-family dwellings under the following conditions:
- 1.** One of the two dwelling units shall conform to the requirements of the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Program Guide; and
 - 2.** Each two-family dwelling within the townhouse structure shall meet the definition of Attached House in Portland City Code Title 33, Planning & Zoning, including that it is located on its own lot. For purposes of Title 33, each attached two-family dwelling shall be considered an Attached House with an ADU.
 - 3.** NFPA 13-D fire sprinklers shall be installed throughout the townhouse structure, under a permit from the Bureau of Development Services; and
 - 4.** No reductions for fire rating or fire rating continuity in R302.2 shall be allowed.
 - 5.** When a townhouse is constructed as a two-family dwelling unit, only the main unit must have access to a yard or public way on not less than two sides. At least one full side of the ADU shall have access to a yard or public way.
 - 6.** Common spaces serving only the ADU and townhouse main unit are permitted as long as the common space is fully contained between the 2-hour fire-resistance rated townhouse separation walls.
 - 7.** When a townhouse with an ADU is built as a 4-story structure using Code Guide IRC/1/#3:
 - a.** Two exit doors to the exterior, each on a different level, shall be provided from each dwelling unit that has enclosed usable space on more than three levels; and
 - b.** NFPA 13-R fire sprinklers shall be installed throughout the townhouse structure, under a permit through the Fire Marshall's Office.

**ORSC/2/#1 & ORSC/3/#4 Additional Dwelling Units and Common Spaces within
Townhouse Structures Page 3 of 3
September 16, 2019**

D. Mixed occupancies are not permitted in townhouse structures. However, one common storage space, such as a trash room or bike parking, serving the occupants of the townhouse structure is permitted under the following conditions.

1. The area of the common space shall be no larger than 150 square feet;
2. The common space shall be separated from the other areas of the townhouse structure with 2-hour fire resistance rated horizontal and vertical assemblies and the supporting construction; and
3. The common space shall be provided with 13-D sprinklers.

Alternative proposals not meeting the requirements of this code guide, with the exception of C.2, will be considered on a case-by-case basis through the BDS administrative appeals process.

New September 16, 2019