

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

**ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICY/CODE**

INTERPRETATION #: CI-121

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

4-11-120, Definitions L

REFERENCE:

Ordinance 5828

SUBJECT:

Inaccurate Code Reference in Lowest Floor Definition

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to RMC 4-11-20 DEFINITIONS L, “Lowest Floor” is defined as “The lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). An unfinished or flood-resistant enclosure, usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage, in an area other than a basement area, is not considered a building’s lowest floor; provided, that such enclosure is not built so as to render the structure in violation of the applicable non-elevation design requirements of RMC 4-3-050I3a(ii).”

RMC 4-3-050I.3.a.ii, referenced in the “Lowest Floor” definition, states “An enhanced buffer shall never be less than seventy five percent (75%) of the standard width at its narrowest point [...].” This code is in the context of wetland buffers in critical areas and it not the code that was intended to be referenced in the “Lowest Floor” definition.

JUSTIFICATION:

Because the Renton Municipal Code (RMC) referenced in RMC 4-11-120 Definitions is incorrect, it should be amended to instead reference RMC 4-3-050G.4.d, which states the following:

G. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

4. Flood Hazard Areas

d. Specific Standards: In all flood hazard areas, the following provisions are required:

i. Residential Construction:

(a) New construction and substantial improvement of any residential structure shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated a minimum of one foot (1') above base flood elevation.

(b) Fully enclosed areas below the lowest floor that are subject to flooding are prohibited, or shall be designed to automatically equalize hydrostatic flood forces on exterior walls by allowing for the entry and exit of flood waters. Designs for meeting this requirement must either be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect or must meet or exceed the following minimum criteria:

(1) A minimum of two (2) openings having a total net area of not less than one square inch for every square foot of enclosed area subject to flooding shall be provided; and

(2) The bottom of all openings shall be no higher than one foot (1') above grade; and

(3) Openings may be equipped with screens, louvers, or other coverings or devices; provided, that they permit the automatic entry and exit of flood waters.

ii. Manufactured Homes:

(a) All manufactured homes to be placed or substantially improved within Zones A1-A30, AH, and AE on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map, shall be elevated on a permanent foundation such that the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated a minimum of one foot (1') above the base flood elevation and be secured to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement.

(b) Manufactured homes to be placed or substantially improved on sites in an existing manufactured home park or subdivision within Zones A1-30, AH, and AE on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map that are not subject to the above manufactured home provisions shall be elevated so that either the lowest floor of the manufactured home is elevated a minimum of one foot (1') above the base flood elevation or the manufactured home chassis is supported by reinforced piers or other foundation elements of at least equivalent strength that are no less than thirty six inches (36") in height above grade and be secured to an adequately anchored foundation system to resist flotation, collapse, and lateral movement.

iii. Nonresidential Construction: New construction or substantial improvement of any commercial, industrial or other nonresidential

structure shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated a minimum of one foot (1') above the level of the base flood elevation, or, together with attendant utility and sanitary facilities, shall:

(a) Be floodproofed so that below the minimum elevation required in this subsection G the structure is watertight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water;

(b) Have structural components capable of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and effects of buoyancy;

(c) Be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect so that the design and methods of construction are in accordance with accepted standards of practice for meeting provisions of this subsection based on their development and/or review of the structural design, specifications and plans. Such certifications shall be provided to the Administrator;

(d) Nonresidential structures that are elevated, but not floodproofed, must meet the same standards for space below the lowest floor as described in this subsection G.

iv. Recreational Vehicles: Recreational vehicles placed on sites within Zones A1-30, AH, and AE on the community's Flood Insurance Rate Map not including recreational vehicle storage lots shall either:

(a) Be on the site for fewer than one hundred eighty (180) consecutive days;

(b) Be fully licensed and ready for highway use, on its wheels or jacking system, attached to the site only by quick disconnect type utilities and security devices, and have no permanently attached additions; or

(c) Meet the requirements of this subsection G and the elevation and anchoring requirements for manufactured homes.

DECISION: Amend RMC 4-11-120L as shown below.

**ADMINISTRATOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

EFFECTIVE DATE:

**APPEAL
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

DISCLAIMER: Excerpts from the Renton Municipal Code shown below may not contain the most recently codified text. In such instances, code amendments implemented through this Administrative Code Interpretation shall be construed to affect the current code and past/future Administrative Code Interpretations not yet codified in the same manner as shown below. Should any conflicts result the Administrator shall determine the effective code.

**CODE
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT
DETERMINATIONS:**

RMC 4-11-120 DEFINITIONS L:

LOWEST FLOOR: The lowest floor of the lowest enclosed area (including basement). An unfinished or flood-resistant enclosure, usable solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage, in an area other than a basement area, is not considered a building's lowest floor; provided, that such enclosure is not built so as to render the structure in violation of the applicable non-elevation design requirements of ~~RMC 4-3-05013a(ii)~~
[RMC 4-3-050G.4.d.](#)

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