

**Oregon
Interpretive Ruling No. 93-21
TENNIS COURT ROOMS**

Requested By: PPPI MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

QUESTION

What are the occupancy classification and exit requirements for enclosed tennis courts without spectator seating or areas?

APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS

1993 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC), Sections 501, 505(£)2, 506(c), 3302(b) exception and Table 33-A.

BACKGROUND

A code change was proposed in 1981 to establish a new occupancy subdivision for tennis courts. During the hearings, the testimony was supportive that there was a problem, but against the proposed code language. The Board voted against the change. In a subsequent meeting between the State Fire Marshal and BCD (Building Codes Division) staff and the proponent, this interpretation was developed which solves the problem without need of code amendment.

The concern is lack of uniformity of classification of tennis courts among jurisdictions. Section 501, Paragraph 2, gives authority to the building official to classify occupancy. Occupancies not mentioned are assigned to the occupancy class they most resemble.

Tennis courts are not specifically mentioned in any occupancy class, so tennis courts are classified differently in different jurisdictions.

Since enclosed tennis courts are large, open spaces without columns, they are attractive as assembly areas for concerts, dances, exhibits, or with move-in bleachers for tournaments. Such attraction leads the building official and fire marshal to classify them as assembly occupancies, even over the protest of the designer or owner who pledge that the facilities will never be used in this way. Classification as an A occupancy brings with it restrictions on size and more demanding fire resistive construction.

In contrast, without the "assembly" concern and by logically eliminating other classes, the B-2 classification remains the most logical classification for large, open areas with minimum occupancy and lire load. B-2 occupancies give the advantage of larger areas with reduction in fire resistive construction. The Fire Marshal's office suggests that, with sprinklers, these buildings may be quite large without area separation walls if Section 505(£)2 Exception is satisfied.

Table 33-A also does not specify exiting for tennis courts. Section 3302(b) Exception permits the occupancy load to be increased if added exits are provided. The building official may require documentation of proposed exiting systems. The Fire Marshal's office recommends the use of a formula of one exit per court, with a minimum of two. This formula is expected to provide adequate exiting, even if the building was sporadically used for assembly purposes.

Reference: SCAB minutes 4/24/81, 5/26/81.

Originally Approved by: Jane F. Huston, Director of Commerce

FINDINGS

Code requirements in effect at the time of the original ruling are similar to current code provisions. This interpretation is authorized by ORS 455.060, Rulings on Acceptability of Materials, Designs or Methods of Construction and Attorney General's Opinion OP-5208 issued October I, 1981, advising the statute permits authoritative interpretations of existing code requirements.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Structural Code Advisory Board, by interpretive ruling, determines enclosed tennis courts without permanent spectator seating shall be a B-2 occupancy. Exits shall be provided at one per court, with a minimum of two from the enclosed area. Enclosed tennis courts with permanent spectator seating shall be A Occupancies and shall comply with the appropriate A Occupancy classification and exiting. Interpretive Ruling 93-21 replaces PPPI-4087.

(signed July 21, 1993)

John Talbott, Chairman
Structural Code Advisory Board

The recommendations and findings of the Structural Code Advisory Board are accepted and the conclusions are adopted.

(signed July 30, 1993)

Michelle I. Patterson for
Gary J. Wicks, Administrator
Building Codes Agency