



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING THE EXTENT OF MODIFICATION TO EXISTING STRUCTURES

Application of Guidelines:

Several County Code sections require calculating the extent of modifications to the “major structural components” of existing structures, to determine permit requirements or other reviews required for specific projects. The Administrative Guidelines provided below shall be used to determine the extent to which major structural components have been altered, and to determine whether a project would be considered “reconstruction” or reach other thresholds established in specific code provisions for discretionary review. The following code sections establish permit or approval requirements based on the extent of modification to major structural components:

- Section 13.10.700-R: Definition for “Reconstruction” in the Zoning Ordinance
- Section 13.10.260(c)1: “Modifications to a structure accommodating a nonconforming use”
- Section 13.10.262: “Nonconforming Structures”
- Section 16.10.040(s): Definition of “Development/ Development Activities” in the Geologic Hazards Ordinance.

Administrative Guidelines:

Santa Cruz County Code Section 13.10.700-M defines “Major Structural Components” as follows:

Major Structural Components. The foundation, floor framing, exterior wall framing and roof framing of a structure. Exterior siding, doors, window glazing, roofing materials, decks, chimneys and interior elements including but not limited to interior walls and sheetrock, insulation, fixtures, and mechanical, electrical and plumbing elements are not considered major structural components. The extent of alterations to major structural components will be calculated in accordance with administrative guidelines adopted by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

The guidelines below establish how each of four “major structural components” shall be weighted according to its relative significance in a typical residential or commercial structure. The weighted value for each component is:

Roof framing: 15%,
Exterior wall framing: 65%,
Floor framing: 10%,
Foundation: 10%.

1. The following calculations shall be used to evaluate the major structural components:

(a) Roof framing:

The total area of the roof is the area of the two-dimensional polygons(s) shown on a plan view of the structure's existing roof. Calculate modifications to the roof as a percentage of the total roof area. Multiply that figure by 15%.

(b) Exterior walls:

The total length of the existing exterior walls is the perimeter of first story exterior walls plus the perimeter of upper story exterior walls added together. Any length of wall that, during the course of construction, is detached from both the floor or foundation structure below and the roof or story above, will also be considered modified. Calculate modifications to the exterior walls as a percentage of the total length of existing exterior walls. Multiply that figure by 65%.

(c) Floor framing:

The total existing floor area is obtained by adding together the habitable and nonhabitable areas on the first story plus the habitable and nonhabitable areas of any upper stories. Calculate modifications to floor framing as a percentage of total floor area. Multiply that figure by 10%.

(d) Foundation:

Calculate the portion of the foundation proposed to be modified as a percentage of existing foundation elements. Multiply that figure by 10%.

2. The total extent of work is equal to the sum of the products obtained in steps (a) through (d).