

Oregon
Interpretive Ruling No. 93-59
TOTAL PERIMETER OF A BUILDING ON SLOPING
SITE IN CALCULATING HEIGHT IN STORIES

Requested By: PPPI MANUAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

QUESTION

In calculating the number of stories in a building, the code makes reference to the "total perimeter" of the building. What would be the total perimeter for the hillside dwelling illustrated in Figures Nos. 6 and 71

APPLICABLE CODE SECTIONS

1993 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC), Sections 420 and One and Two Family Dwelling Specialty Code (Dwelling Code), Sections R-I03 and R-118 (Definitions for Story and Story Above Grade) and ICBO Application/Interpretation Manual.

BACKGROUND

Normal site and foundation situations pose no problems. Problems arise on lots of sloping topography where a perimeter foundation is not always used or is only partially used in combination with post and beam. It is common for a house and garage, 3 feet to 20 feet apart, to be attached by an elevated covered walkway or deck. In such situations the method of figuring total perimeter could substantially affect the building's height in stories

ICBO Application/interpretation Manual, 1991 edition:

The intent of the language "total perimeter" is to define the outer limits of any particular level under consideration. Therefore, in the case depicted, the total perimeter for the lowest level would be bounded by the retaining wall, the downslope exterior wall and the east and west exterior walls. The dwelling illustrated has two stories and a basement for the downslope segment.

R-I03- SCOPE states in part:

The provisions of this code apply to the construction, prefabrication, alteration, repair, use, occupancy and maintenance of detached one- or two-family dwellings not more than three stories in height, and their accessory structures.

Story. Story is that portion of a building included between the upper surface of any floor and the upper surface of the floor next above, except that the topmost story shall be that habitable portion of a building included between the upper surface of the topmost floor and ceiling or roof above.

Story Above Grade. Any story having its finished floor surface entirely above grade except that a basement shall be considered as a story above grade when the finished surface of the floor above the basement is:

1. More than 6 feet above grade;
2. More than 6 feet above the finished ground level for more than 50 percent of the total building perimeter; or
3. More than 12 feet above the finished ground level at any point.

FINDINGS

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 1, 1981, which advised the statute permits authoritative interpretations of existing code requirements.

CONCLUSION

The Structural Code Advisory Board by ruling adopts the ICBO interpretation set forth above when the structure falls under the requirements of the *OSSC*. When the structure is regulated under the Dwelling Code the requirements found in the definitions under *STORY ABOVE GRADE* would be used to calculate

the number of stories and the method of using the "total perimeter" would not be applicable.

Interpretive Ruling 93-59 replaces PPPI-4077.

(signed November 17, 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 November 19, 1993)

Gary J. Wicks, Administrator
Building Codes Division

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