

This information is provided as general guidance. The Examinations and Qualifications Committee will consider each individual project submitted with SE applications.

1. What determines if a structure is customarily occupied by humans?

A: The occupancy classification is the formal designation of the primary purpose of the building as determined by the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC). For example, If the structure is classified as “storage” under OSSC Section 311 Storage Group S, it is generally not considered customarily occupied by humans even though humans do periodically pass through. Common structures not considered customarily occupied by humans are data centers, parking garages, and buildings housing non-hazardous materials and industrial equipment.

2. What determines if a structure’s primary occupancy is for public assembly?

A: If the combined design occupant load of all assembly spaces exceeds 50-percent of the total building design occupant load, OR if the aggregate floor area of all assembly spaces exceeds 50-percent of the building area, assembly shall be assigned as the primary occupancy.

3. If a structure’s primary occupancy is public assembly, should the whole structure have a total occupancy greater than 300 to be considered a Significant Structure, or just the public assembly portion?

A: The public assembly portion(s) of the building must have a total/summed occupant load greater than 300.

4. What amount of hazardous chemicals determines a structure to be classified as Risk Category III or IV?

A: Applicants must provide sufficient information to show that structures containing quantities of highly toxic materials exceed the allowable quantities per control area as given in Table 307.1(2) of the OSSC and are sufficient to pose a threat to the public if released. Buildings and structures not assigned Risk Category IV containing quantities of toxic or explosive material that exceed the allowable quantities per control area as given in Table 307.1(1) or 307.1(2) of the OSSC and are sufficient to pose a threat to the public if released are to be assigned Risk Category III, in accordance with Section 1604.5 of the OSSC.

5. Is a structure that elected to be Risk Category III or IV but would otherwise be Risk Category I or II in Table 1604.5 considered a significant structure for the purposes of a SE application?

A: This will be specific to each project and will require clear documentation, such as the Certificate of Occupancy, permit application, and submittal documents to show how the design exceeds Risk Category I or II and is used in a manner that requires it to be a significant structure.

6. Can a private utility facility ever be considered a significant structure?

A: No. Table 1604.5 limits what can be considered as qualifying utilities to those that are public.

7. When is a cell or radio tower considered a significant structure?

A: A cell or radio tower can be considered a significant structure if it is categorized as an essential facility under ORS 672.107(1)(a) and has a ground area of more than 4,000 square feet or is more than 20 feet in height, and houses equipment in government communication centers or other facilities required for emergency response. “Required for emergency response” is limited to facilities for the exclusive use of emergency response personnel and does not include facilities for general public communication.

8. What water storage facilities and pump structures are considered significant structures?

A: Water storage facilities and pump structures required to maintain water pressure for fire suppression and that have a ground area of more than 4,000 square feet or are more than 20 feet in height can be considered significant structures.

9. Do plans need to be permitted to be considered significant structures?

A: This determination will be specific to each project. While it is not required that the structure is being/has been built, the EQC will use its expertise to determine if the structure would qualify.

10. Are bridges ever considered a significant structure?

A: No.