

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT POLICY/ORDINANCE
INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation No.: BATH-ATTGAR (Bathrooms in attached garages – permit requirements)

Effective Date: October 14, 2008

Revised: none

Question

Are bathrooms allowed in attached garages with a building permit only?

Applicable Ordinance Section(s)

13.10.265(b)

13.20.068(a)

INTERPRETATION:

No. A bathroom (toilet, shower or bathtub) in an attached garage with or without interior access requires a Level 4 Use Approval.

Reason:

Section 13.10.700 defines a garage as “an accessory structure or a portion of a main structure, having a permanent roof, and designed for the storage of motor vehicles.” Although a garage directly attached to a main structure is considered part of that structure rather than a separate accessory structure, the definition of garage specifically states that the purpose of a garage is to store motor vehicles. It is clear from this definition that garages are not intended for other types of uses such as bathrooms. Requiring a Level 4 Use Approval for a bathroom (toilet, shower, or bathtub) in an attached garage is consistent with requiring Level 4 Use Approvals for bathrooms in non-habitable accessory structures, including detached garages, as outlined in Section 13.10.611(c) 6. Level 4 Use Approvals for bathrooms in attached garages would be subject to the criteria that apply to the approval of bathrooms in accessory structures, as outlined in 13.10.611(c) 6. Sinks are allowed in both attached and detached garages, subject to obtaining a building permit, as is stated in Section 13.10.611(c)(2). For more information regarding when a bathroom could be approved in an attached garage with a Level 4 Use Approval, see Policy Interpretation RES-AS-01.

Tom Burns, Planning Director

Date