NC Department of Insurance
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division
1202 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1202
919-647-0001

Internet Sweepstakes Café Occupancy Classification

Code: 2012 Building Code   **Date:** January 17, 2012

Section: 303 & 304   **Rev.:** September 20, 2017

Question:

What occupancy type is an internet sweepstakes cafe?

Answer:

1. It is Group B if it meets the following requirement:
   1.1. There is a receptionist that assigns the gaming stations to individuals and controls access to the machines just as a receptionist in a doctor's office controls access to exam rooms.
   1.2. The floor area required for each gaming station is greater than 15 square feet. If the occupant load is based on one person per gaming machine and the space for each individual machine is 15 square feet or less, then the area is a Group A-3 occupancy if the total occupant load for the gaming area is 50 or greater.
   1.3. Persons waiting to use machines are located in a specified waiting area.

   An area organized as described above will operate most like an office and can be, therefore, classified as Group B.

   Occupant loading would be calculated at 100 square feet per person or one occupant per gaming machine; whichever is greater for the gaming area. The waiting area would be calculated at 15 square feet per person.

2. It is a Group B if it has an occupant load of less than 50 when calculated based on 11 square feet per person for "gaming floors" from table 1004.1.1.

3. It is Group A-3 if it has an occupant load of 50 or more when calculated based on 11 square feet per person for "gaming floors" from table 1004.1.1.

Items #2 & #3 above assume a space that is not organized as described in Item #1.

While not required for Group B occupancies, NCDoI recommends posting the maximum occupant load for all such facilities in the reception area at a location approved by the local fire official.

This use is also known as "*internet gaming parlors*", *internet cafés*, "*cyber cafés*" as well as other similar names. Traditionally the term "*internet café*" or "*cyber cafés*" described a public access point for internet use such as is found in bookstores, coffee shops, restaurants, or similar space, but for purposes of this interpretation an *internet café* or *cyber café* is a use where patrons buy timed internet access for purposes of on-line gaming within those same establishments.