

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Defining Assembly Spaces Accessory to Educational Occupancies**

**Code:** 2012 Building Code  
**Section:** 303.1

**Date:** January 19, 2015

**Question:**

Are assembly spaces that are accessory to educational occupancies limited to 10% of the floor of the building in order to be considered “accessory” for purposes of applying exception #4 of Section 303.1?

**Answer:**

No. The term “accessory” in Exception #4 is used to describe how the assembly occupancy must function. The intent is to ensure that the assembly occupancy is not operating independent of the Group E occupancy. A building containing the assembly occupancy must, therefore, also contain a Group E occupancy. The Group E occupancy must utilize more than 50% of the building area for the assembly area to be considered “accessory” to the Group E occupancy.

**Keywords:**

Gyms, gymnasiums, cafeterias, lunchrooms, auditoriums, library, libraries, schools