

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Guidance Paper: Unfinished Room Names on Residential Plans**

**Code:** 2018 NC Administrative Code and Policies

**Date:** 7/2/2020

**Section:** Section 106.2.1

**Question #1:**

We have an unfinished room that may be finished in the future. Is this room required to meet the current NC Residential Code?

**106.2.1 Requirements.** Drawings and specifications, as required by the inspection department, shall be drawn to scale with sufficient clarity and detail to indicate the nature and character of the work and shall accompany the application for a permit. All information, drawings, specifications and accompanying data shall bear the name, address and signature of the person responsible for the design.

**Opinion:**

Yes. The room must meet the NC Residential Code for the intended use. Designers should label the room correctly for the intended use. If a room changes to a bedroom or sleeping room in the future, then additional code requirements would apply. Permit holders, owners, real estate brokers and Code Enforcement Officials need to be aware what the specific Code requirements are for the room based upon the room's use. The following names of rooms would not be required to meet specific requirements for a bedroom or sleeping room, unless that room becomes a bedroom or sleeping room:

*Bonus Room, Media, Library, Study, other room names that do not indicate sleeping.*

**Example:**

A *Bonus Room* is unfinished and may be finished sometime in the future. The room would not be required to meet the specific requirements for that of a bedroom or sleeping room. If the bonus room changes to a bedroom or sleeping room, then permits and modifications to the room would be required to meet the current NC Residential Code. Some requirements on such a modification would be adding septic tank lines for the additional bedroom, installation of a smoke detector, adding a closet (the Real Estate industry defines bedrooms as ones with closets; however, the NC Residential Code does not), arc-fault receptacles (if built before under 2012 NC Codes) and verification of an emergency escape and rescue opening (ie: window) in Section R310.

**Suggestion:**

A Code Enforcement Official can note on the plans, inspection report, and/or on the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) that the *Bonus Room* is not to be used as a bedroom or sleeping room.

**Keywords:** Designer, house, home

*The guidance and opinions contained herein are not legal advice and may not necessarily reflect the most current statutory or code language.*