NC Department of Insurance
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division
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Internet Sweepstakes Café Occupancy Classification

Code: 2018 Building Code   **Date:** September 5, 2018
Section: 303 & 304   **Revised:** December 21, 2021

Question:
What occupancy classification is an internet sweepstakes cafe?

Answer:

The occupancy classification could be Group B or Group A-3. The following will assist in determining the proper classification.

1. It is Group B if it meets all the following requirements:
    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 For each gaming room the floor area required for each gaming station is greater than 15 square feet or the total occupant load is less than 50 where the floor area for each gaming station is 15 square feet or less.
    1.3 Persons waiting to use machines are in a specified waiting area.
    1.4 The total occupant load of the business is less than 50 if only one exit is provided.

    An area organized as described above will operate most like an office and therefore can be 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 Group A-3 if it has an occupant load of 50 or more in the gaming area.

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.