



RESIDENTIAL CODE MANUAL
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION
Based on the 2011 LACRC

#1005
R202
Article 1
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DEFINITION OF THE TERMS: TOWNHOUSE, CONDOMINIUM, and CARRIAGE UNIT

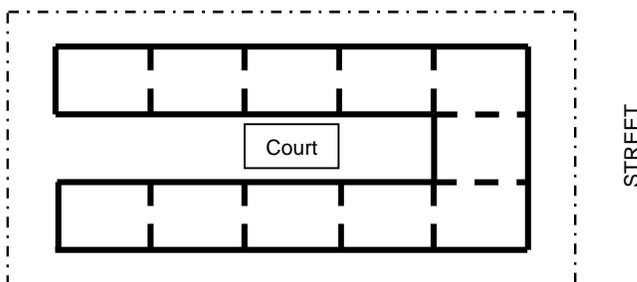
I. TOWNHOUSE

The term “townhouse” is not defined consistently between the Residential Code and the Building Code. Because of this inconsistency, “townhouse” designed with a “court” is not included in either the Residential Code or the Building Code. To determine which code applies to this type of building, the definition in the Building Code shall be used.

The term “Townhouse” as defined in the Building Code is as follows:

TOWNHOUSE. A single-family *dwelling unit* constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from the foundation to roof and with open space on at least two sides.

The following is one such example: two story, 11-unit townhouse using a court.



Townhouses may have private garages and shall be interpreted to meet the definition of townhouse, provided each unit extends from foundation or basement walls to roof with no vertical overlap of any parts of adjoining units. Projections beyond the unit’s foundation or basement walls are permitted if such occurrences do not project over adjoining units. In addition, each unit’s exterior walls may recess from the foundation or basement walls.

II. CONDOMINIUM OR RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM

To determine when townhouses are required to comply with Chapter 11A of the Building Code per Section R320.1, the following criteria shall be used.

1. Townhouses that are described in the subdivision process as “Condominium” and are newly-constructed “Condominiums” with 4 or more dwelling units are required to comply with Chapter 11A of the Building Code per Section R320.1 of the Residential Code and Item 2 of Section 1102A.1 of the Building Code.
2. A newly-constructed townhouse of 3 or more dwelling units is required to comply with Chapter 11A of the Building Code as an “apartment”.

The term “Condominium” or “Residential Condominium” is a real estate term that describes a method of ownership of residential buildings, rather than a method of constructing residential buildings.

Section 783, of Division 2, Part 2, Title 2 “Estates in Real Property” of the California Civil Code defines “Condominium” as:

A condominium is an estate in real property described in subdivision (f) of Section 1351 of the Civil Code. A condominium may, with respect to the duration of its enjoyment, be either (1) an estate of inheritance or perpetual estate, (2) an estate for life, (3) an estate for years, such as a leasehold or a subleasehold, or (4) any combination of the foregoing.

Subdivision (f) of Section 1351 of the California Civil Code states:

A "condominium project" means a development consisting of condominiums. A condominium consists of an undivided interest in common in a portion of real property coupled with a separate interest in space called a unit, the boundaries of which are described on a recorded final map, parcel map, or condominium plan in sufficient detail to locate all boundaries thereof... The portion or portions of the real property held in undivided interest may be all of the real property, except for the separate interests, or may include a particular three-dimensional portion thereof, the boundaries of which are described on a recorded final map, parcel map, or condominium plan. The area within these boundaries may be filled with air, earth, or water, or any combination thereof, and need not be physically attached to land except by easements for access and, if necessary, support. An individual condominium within a condominium project may include, in addition, a separate interest in other portions of the real property.

III. CARRIAGE UNIT

The term “Carriage Unit” is used to describe a special group of “townhouse” that is exempt from complying with disabled access requirements of Chapter 11A of the Building Code.

***CARRIAGE UNIT** is a dwelling unit with living space on one or more floors immediately above a Group U, private garage or garages. The footprint of the garage or garages is used as the footprint for the remaining floor or floors of the units above and the garage level contains no habitable space.*

***Note:** Dwelling units located over a common garage shall not be considered carriage units.*

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