

New vs. Major Remodel For Residential Dwelling

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 25, 2019

Background: In recent years, there are many homeowners propose to do major remodel for their property. Some of these “major remodel” involves tearing down roof, ceiling and 95% of interior/exterior walls. When completed, it is a new home with some old underground plumbing, old foundation system, overhead power supply instead of underground and very small portion of old wall. This creates challenge for us to enforce Building Code, Energy Code, Green Code, Mechanical Code, Electrical Code, Plumbing Code, Fire Sprinkler requirements, etc on a consistent basis.

County Ordinance requires all electrical utility service to be installed underground when it is (1) a new house, or (2) the remodeling, alteration, or addition to an existing main building, exceeds 50 percent of the value and/or area of the existing building.

Substantial Improvement is defined in the California Existing Building Code as “any repair, alteration, addition, or improvement of a building or structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure, before the improvement or repair is started.”

Policy:

All major remodel involves voluntary demolition of 50 percent or more of the existing dwelling structure excluding any attached garage will be considered new dwelling. This new dwelling shall comply with all current adopted State Codes.

Instruction: Please use the table below to calculate the 50 percent threshold. Two examples are attached for reference.

Approved by:



Hadi Tabatabaee, P.E., CBO
County Building Official

	Roof (square feet)	Total Walls -Exterior and Interior (feet)	Floor Framing (square feet)	Foundation/Slab/Raised Floor (square feet)	Total
Existing Area or Length A					—
Proposed Demolition B					—
% Demolished B/A					—
Assigned Factor as % of Dwelling C	30% (two story) 40% (one story)	50%	10% (two story) 0% (one story)	10%	—
% Demolished (B/A) X C					

Example 1: 2,000 square feet one story dwelling

	Roof (square feet)	Total Walls -Exterior and Interior (feet)	Floor Framing (square feet)	Foundation/Slab/Raised Floor (square feet)	Total
Existing Area or Length A	2,000	360		2,000	—
Proposed Demolition B	2,000	120		0	—
% Demolished B/A	100%	33%		0%	—
Assigned Factor as % of Dwelling C	30% (two story) 40% (one story)	50%	10% (two story) 0% (one story)	10%	—
% Demolished (B/A) X C	40%	16.5%	---	0%	56.5%

56.5% is more than 50%. This dwelling will be treated as new dwelling and it shall comply with all current adopted State Codes.

Example 2: 1,400 square feet one story dwelling

	Roof (square feet)	Total Walls -Exterior and Interior (feet)	Floor Framing (square feet)	Foundation/Slab/Raised Floor (square feet)	Total
Existing Area or Length A	1,400	280		2,000	—
Proposed Demolition B	700	80		0	—
% Demolished B/A	50%	28.6%		0%	—
Assigned Factor as % of Dwelling C	30% (two story) 40% (one story)	50%	10% (two story) 0% (one story)	10%	—
% Remaining (B/A) X C	20%	14.3%	---	0%	34.3%

34.3% is less than 50%. This is a remodel project. Only the remodel portion needs to comply with all current adopted State Codes.