

Four things a room **MUST** have to be considered a bedroom, according to the International Residential Code:

1. **Entrance:** A bedroom needs at least two methods of egress, so it should be accessible from the house (commonly through a door), and then have one other exit (window or door).
2. **Ceiling Height:** A bedroom ceiling needs to be at least 7 ft tall. It's okay if [some portions of the ceiling are below this level](#), but at least 50% of the ceiling needs to be a minimum of 7 ft in height. Most ceilings tend to be at least 8 ft tall, so ceiling height is not usually an issue (R305.1).
3. **Escape:** A bedroom must have one other method of egress beyond the entrance point. A door to the exterior works as an exit point, and so does a window. According to the [International Residential Code](#), a bedroom window can be between 24 and 44 inches from the floor, it needs at least 5.7 square feet for the opening, and it must measure no less than 24 inches high and 20 inches wide (R310.1).
4. **Size:** The room should be at least 70 sq ft, and more specifically the room cannot be smaller than 7 feet in any horizontal direction (sorry, that 1'x70' room won't work) (R304.2 / R304.4).

As you can see, size, access, light, and ventilation all matter when it comes to defining a bedroom (IRC). There is one more issue we should talk about though. The closet.

Are closets required? A bedroom should probably have a closet since most buyers expect one, but technically the [International Residential Code does NOT mandate a bedroom to have a closet](#). So the lack of a closet does not necessarily mean a room cannot be a bedroom. However, we must ask, what does the local real estate market expect, and what is required by the local city/county? Would buyers consider a room as a bedroom if there is no closet? In newer tract subdivisions it's probably a bigger deal to have no closet, but in older classic homes where bedrooms were sometimes not built with closets, it's very likely not an issue at all. For instance, consider a Victorian home without closets in any bedrooms. While some in the real estate community say closets are always required, that rule doesn't really apply here for two reasons: 1) The IRC definition of a bedroom does not actually mandate a closet; and 2) If the market considers the rooms as bedrooms, that's what they are. It would be highly improbable for buyers to walk through an old Victorian home without closets and say, "The house was stunning and utterly perfect... but there weren't any bedrooms". Does that make sense? Ultimately closets are not technically mandated by the international definition, but they may be expected and/or required by local code.

Source: Sacramento Appraisal Blog, September 9, 2014 Ryan Lundquist

Addendum 9-27-16: Contra Costa County Tax Assessor office uses the definition as set by the agreement between the buyer and seller. If both agree it is a bedroom, then it is assessed as a bedroom.