

# Director's Rule 7-2016

<b>Applicant:</b>  City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections	<b>Page</b>  1 of 6	<b>Supersedes:</b>  25-2014
	<b>Publication:</b>  xx/xx/2016	<b>Effective:</b>  xx/xx/2016
<b>Subject:</b>  Small Efficiency Dwelling Units	<b>Code and Section Reference:</b>  Seattle Building Code	
	<b>Type of Rule:</b>  Code Interpretation	
	<b>Ordinance Authority:</b>  SMC 3.06.040	
<b>Index:</b>  Seattle Building Code	<b>Approved</b>  (signature on file) Nathan Torgelson, Director, Seattle DCI	<b>Date</b>  xx/xx/2016

**BACKGROUND:**

This Rule sets forth minimum room size and other technical requirements for small efficiency dwelling units.

The Seattle Building Code (SBC), Section 1208.3 regulates minimum room sizes for dwelling units, and Section 1208.4 regulates efficiency dwelling units. Section 1208.4 requires an efficiency dwelling unit to have a living room of not less than 220 square feet of floor area. In addition, Section 1208.4 requires there to be a separate closet and bathroom, as well as a kitchen area with a kitchen sink, a cooking appliance, and refrigeration facilities.

This Rule allows for efficiency units smaller than required by Section 1208.4, when other specified amenities are also provided.

**RULE:**

Buildings containing small efficiency dwelling units shall comply with the Seattle Building Code, except when modified by this Rule. Small efficiency dwelling units are single, independent, residential units that consist of one habitable room (excluding kitchen, bath, storage rooms, and built-ins).

***Floor area:***

A small efficiency dwelling unit shall have a single room of at least 150 net square feet of floor area on one level meeting habitable space dimensions of SBC 1208.1. Habitable space shall be measured in accordance with SDCI code interpretations found at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codeinterpretations/default.htm>.

Alternate: If the single room area is at least 120 net square feet, the balance shall be from an unobstructed floor area of an attached kitchen area whose width is not less than 5'-6" from backsplash wall to adjacent parallel wall; see figure 3.

The floor area occupied by bathrooms, cabinets, appliances, structural features, and any closets shall not be included in calculating the net floor area. Dwelling units exceeding a total gross unit size of 320 square feet, measured to the interior face of unit bounding walls and inclusive of these features, shall not be considered a small efficiency dwelling unit and at a minimum, will be required to meet provisions of an efficiency dwelling unit, in accordance with SBC Section 1208.4.

Exception: Total gross unit size can be increased only to meet the minimum requirements for accessibility provisions for Type A units.

***Food preparation area:*** Each small efficiency dwelling unit shall contain a food preparation area. The food preparation area shall include:

- cooking appliance;
- refrigerator;
- sink with hot and cold water;
- food and utensil storage space; and
- contiguous countertop work area of not less than 4 square feet

For the purposes of this Rule only, a microwave oven is permitted to serve as the cooking appliance. The food preparation area shall be provided with two 20 amp small appliance branch circuits. Each circuit shall serve at least one duplex receptacle. Built-in cooking appliances shall be on an additional circuit.

***Closets and Storage:*** A built-in closet shall be provided within each unit.

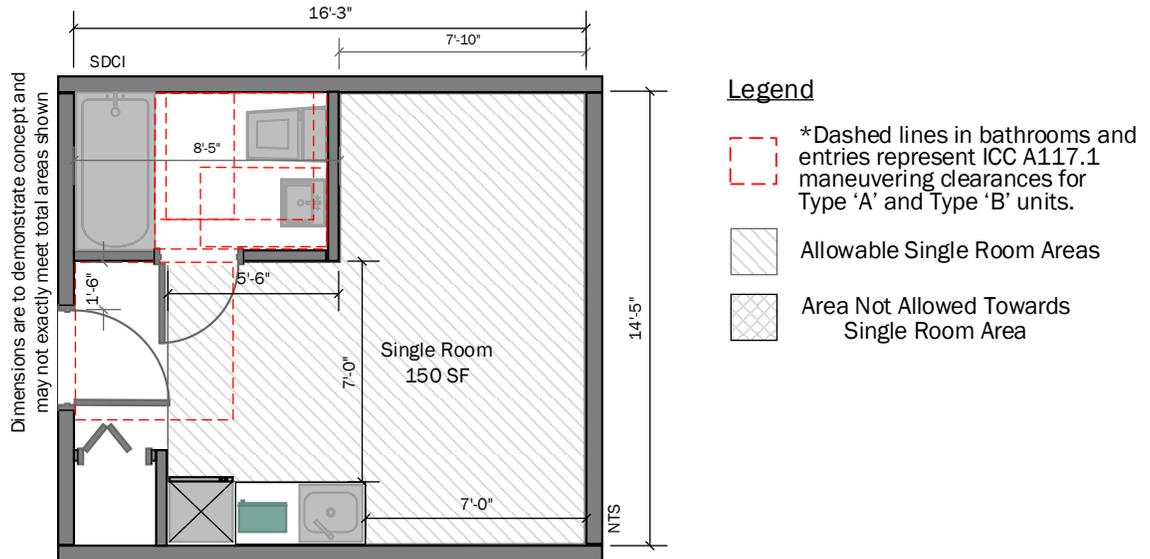
The portion of a closet used to store a built-in bed or other built-in equipment shall not be counted in the unit's required square footage, and it also shall not be counted as a required closet.

In addition, there shall be 55 cubic feet of storage space provided for each unit. This can be located anywhere within the building, and several may be grouped together in a common storage area.

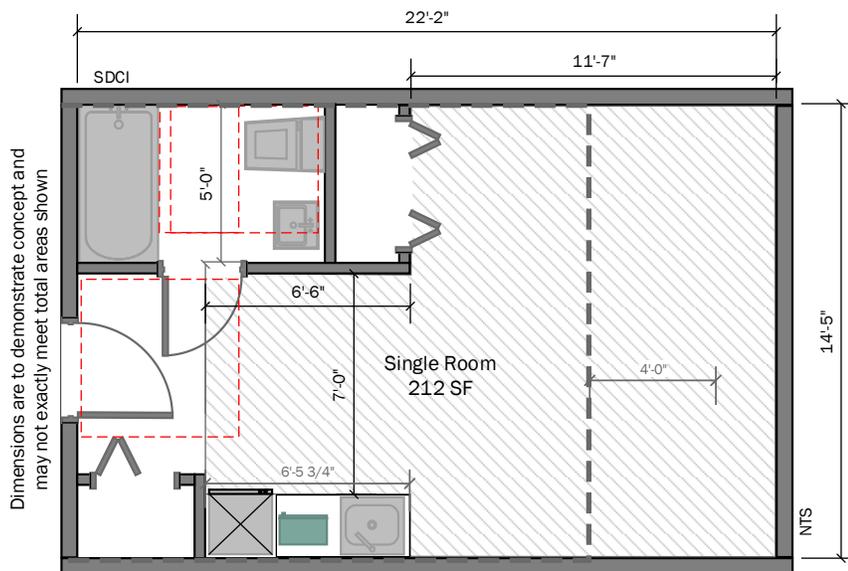
***Natural Light:*** The habitable room in the unit shall be provided with natural light, complying with Section 1205.2.

**Basic Rules:**

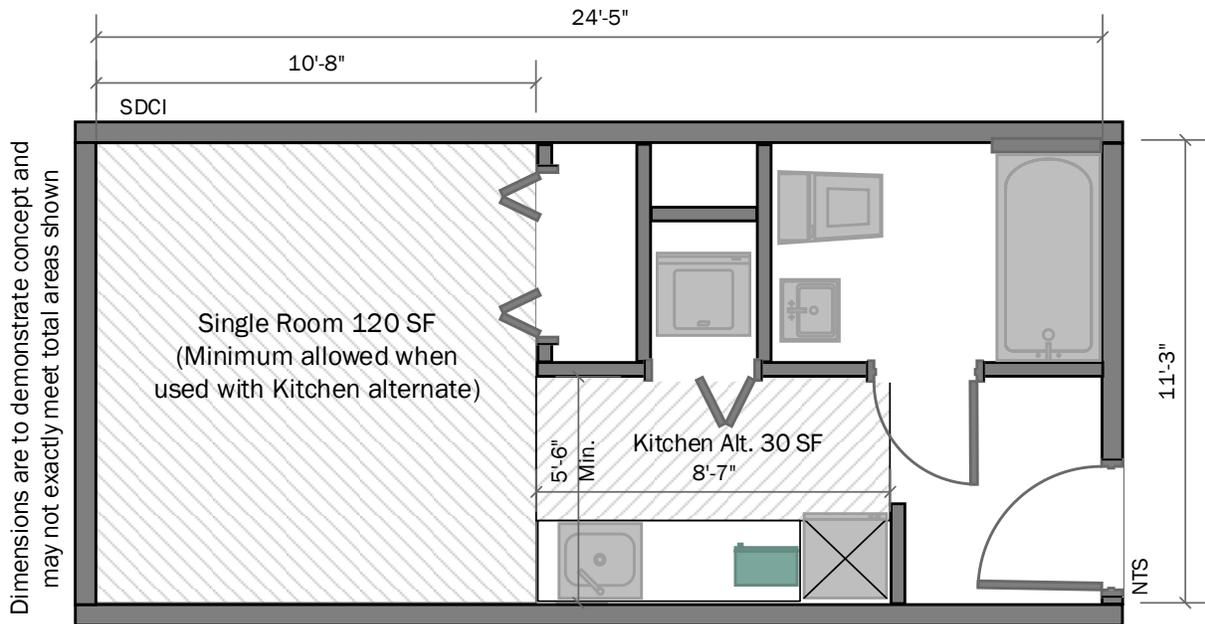
- Maximum gross unit size allowed = <320 SF (interior face of unit bounding walls)  
 (If greater than or equal to 320 SF it is an Efficiency Dwelling Unit (EDU) per SBC 1208.4.)
- Maximum Single Room Size = <220 SF.  
 (If greater than or equal to 220 SF it is an Efficiency Dwelling Unit (EDU) per SBC 1208.4.)
- Minimum Single Room Size Must Be =  $\geq 150$  SF



**FIGURE 1: EXAMPLE OF A BASIC MINIMUM UNIT**  
 $(5'-5" \times 7'-0") + (7'-0" \times 12'-5") + (7'-0" \times 2'-0") = 150$   
 (<220 SF)  
 Gross Unit Size  $16'-3" \times 14'-5" = 234$  (< 320 is OK)  
 Maximum Single Room Size = <220 SF  
 Minimum Single Room Size = >150 SF

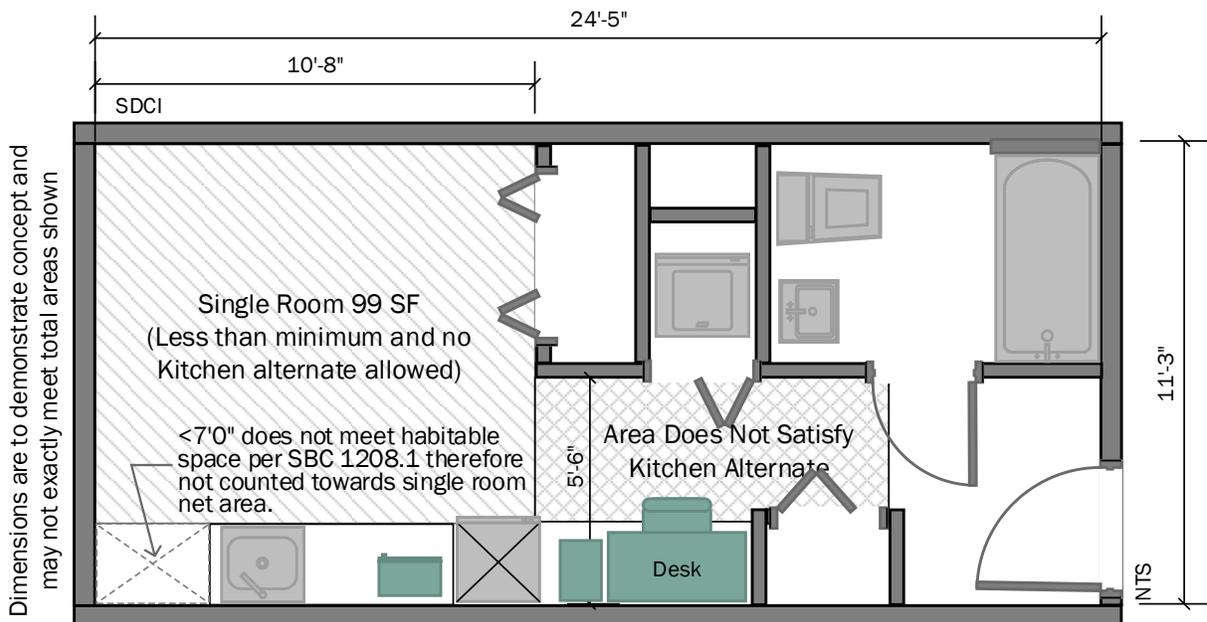


**FIGURE 2: EXAMPLE OF A MAXIMUM GROSS UNIT SIZE**  
 For this example the single room net size of = 212 SF (<220 satisfies SEDU)  
 For this example the gross unit size of  $22'-2" \times 14'-5" = 319.65$  (< 320 satisfies SEDU)



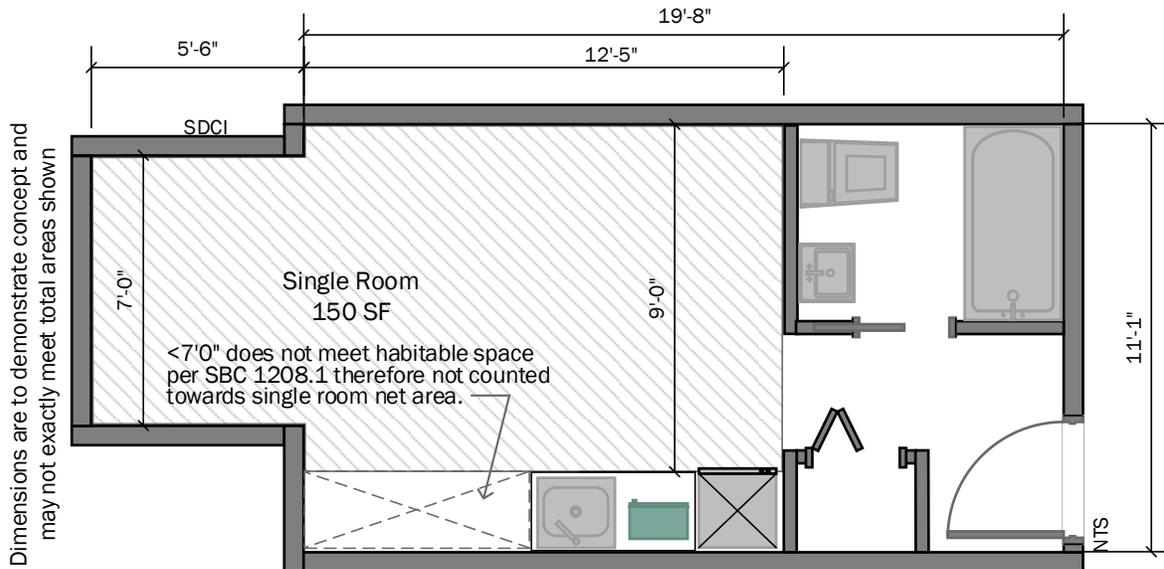
**FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE FOR USE OF ALTERNATE KITCHEN AREA**

120 + 30 = 150 Satisfies Minimum SEDU  
 Gross Unit Size 24'-5" x 11'-3" = 277 SF (<320 is OK)

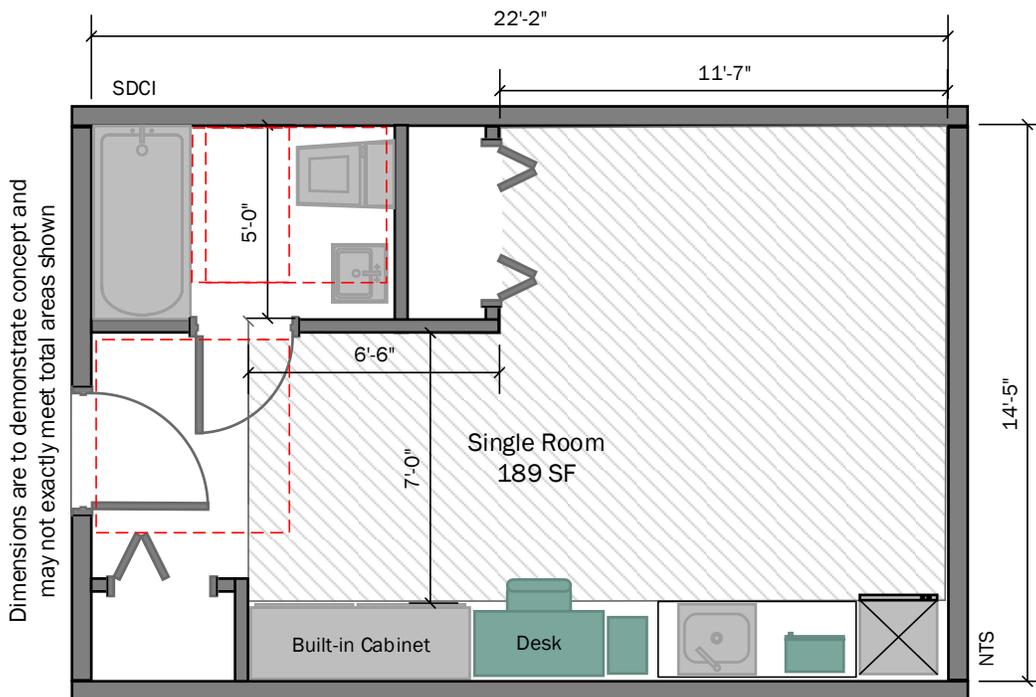


**FIGURE 4: EXAMPLE OF WHERE ALTERNATE FOR KITCHEN AREA IS NOT ALLOWED**

99 SF < 150 Does Not Satisfy Minimum SEDU  
 Gross Unit Size 24'-5" x 11'-3" = 277 SF (<320 is OK)

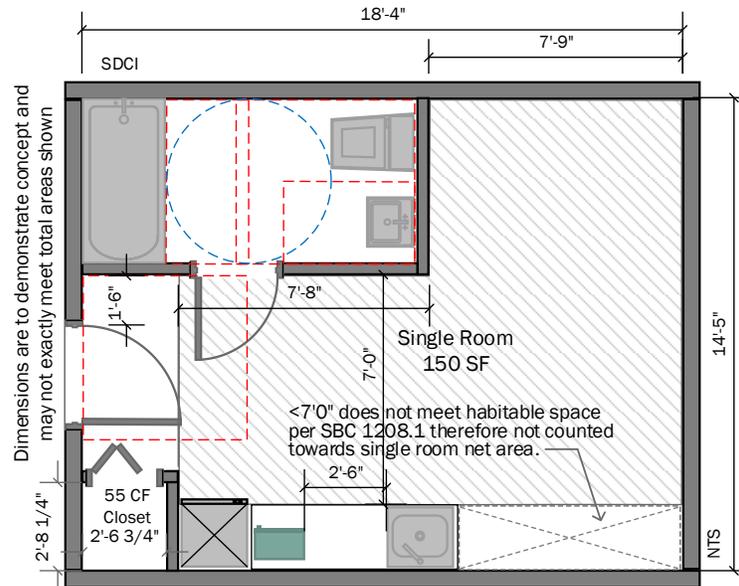


**FIGURE 5: EXAMPLE OF SINGLE ROOM USING MINIMUM HABITABLE AREA**  
 150 SF (<220) satisfies SEDU and total unit = <320 SF  
 Gross Unit Size (5'-6" x 7'-0")+(19'-8" x 11'-1") = 256.5 SF (< 320 is OK)



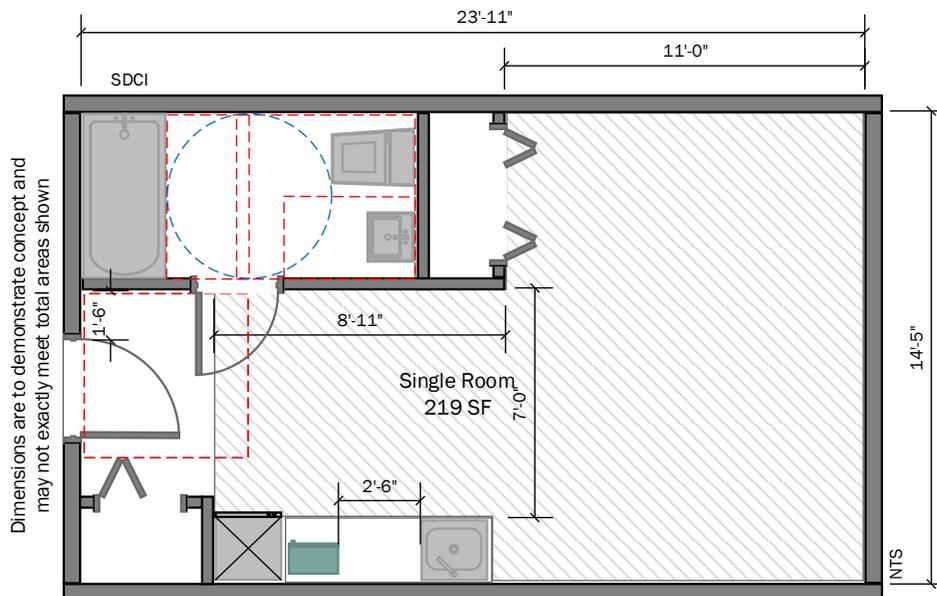
**FIGURE 6: EXAMPLE OF ALLOWABLE ROOM EXTENSION IN MAXIMUM UNIT SIZE**

For this example the single room net size of = 189 SF (<220 satisfies SEDU)  
 For this example the gross unit size of 22'-2" x 14'-5" = 319.65 (< 320 satisfies SEDU)



**FIGURE 7: EXAMPLE OF A BASIC MINIMUM TYPE 'A' UNIT**

$(7'-8" \times 7'-0") + (7'-9" \times 12'-5") = 150 (<220 \text{ SF})$   
 Gross Unit Size  $18'-4" \times 14'-5" = 264 (< 320 \text{ is OK})$   
 Maximum Single Room Size =  $<220 \text{ SF}$   
 Minimum Single Room Size =  $>150 \text{ SF}$



**FIGURE 8: EXAMPLE OF THE TYPE 'A' UNIT EXCEPTION IN A  
 MAXIMUM GROSS UNIT SIZE**

- For this example the gross unit size of  $23'-11" \times 14'-5" = 345 (> 320)$  satisfies SEDU because of Type A Unit Exception)
- For this example the single room net size of = 219 SF ( $<220$  satisfies SEDU)