

Update on bedroom/room definitions for estimating sewage flow

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Background:

The use of bedrooms in the determination of estimated sewage flows has led to discussions as to what constitutes a bedroom. The Florida Building Commission and the Department of Health in 2008 gathered a committee to advise on a universal definition. Initial discussions lead to three options: the first two options defined a bedroom as a room with a minimum size of 70 sqft, conditioning, means of escape and rescue to the outside, closet and door, with the prospect of having to define exclusions for non-bedrooms. The third option proposed a flow based on living area.

DOH-staff proposed in October of 2008 to focus on a definition of rooms and use rooms in flow determinations. This proposal was based on the observation that census data for the number of bedrooms and rooms in Florida appeared to correspond closely. Based on this correspondence, an estimated sewage flow of 50 gpd/room should result in similar estimated sewage flows as 100 gpd/bedroom.

Definition of a Room:

The census definition excludes “Bathrooms, laundry rooms, utility rooms, pantries, and unfinished rooms“. As an alternative to defining these rooms, the committee approach of a minimum room size could be useful. The committee had proposed 70 square feet for this purpose. While this avoids definitions of types of rooms, the room still has to be defined.

Working Definition:

A room is a part of enclosed living space. Its floor area is determined by interior wall dimensions. In order to be considered for sewage flow determinations, a room shall have a minimum floor area of 70 square feet. A room is separated from other rooms by one or more of the following:

- 1. a wall or a half wall (Half walls or bookcases count if built-in)**
- 2. a door**
- 3. two constrictions of at least 4” each on opposite sides of the room**
- 4. a constriction of at least 2 feet if extending from an angle formed by other walls and half walls of more than 180 degrees**
- 5. a constriction of at least 2 feet if extending from an angle of 180 degree or less formed by other walls and half walls and the distance to the next wall is 4 feet or less**
- 6. several constrictions of a cumulative length of at least 2 ft defining the side of a room**
- 7. a stairway (four steps minimum, area is proportioned between levels)**

Additional work to corroborate results:

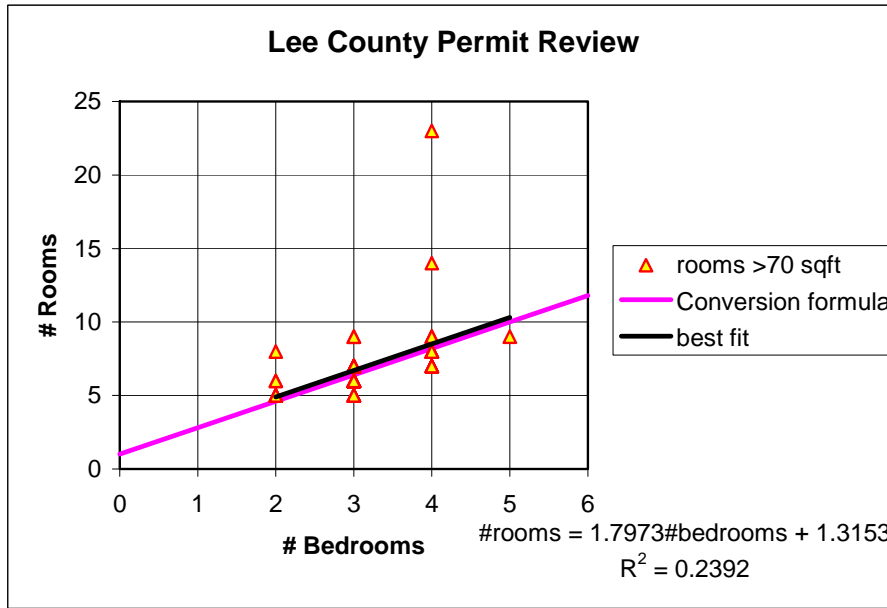
DOH-staff has taken four approaches to compare the two sizing options:

Review of 60 issued permits in Lee county. Lee CHD

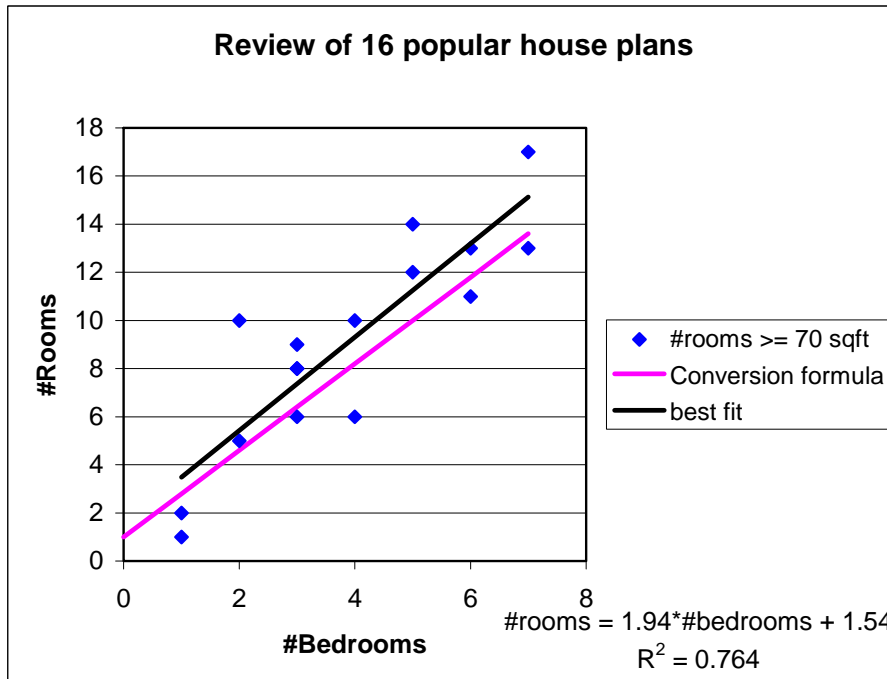
Review of 16 popular house plans found on the internet for 1-7 bedroom houses

Review of variances for the estimated sewage flow provisions of current code

Review of water use studies with respect to sizing parameters



22 more, 24 same, 14 less



8 more, 4 same, 4 less