



Escambia County Building Inspections Division
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CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY PERMIT GUIDELINES

General:

The State of Florida requires a new Certificate of Occupancy to be issued when an existing building changes its type of occupancy. All Change of Occupancy types require that you complete Building Permit Application and Change of Occupancy Permit even if no alterations will be done to the property or to the building for it to be a commercial use. Following issuance of the Change of Occupancy Permit, a Building and Fire Safety Inspection will be necessary prior to issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy.

If there is a change in the occupancy classification, as defined in the Florida Building Code, the proposed building or space shall be made to comply with all current codes including accessibility provisions.

Examples:

Print shop (business) to a retail store (mercantile)
House (Residential) to a day care (institutional)

The 2007 Florida Building Code states:

Section 110.1

"No change in the existing occupancy classification of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made until the building official has issued a certificate of occupancy thereof as provided herein."

These requirements are applicable to Change of Occupancy:

1. A permit application must be completed along with a sketch showing current floor plan.
2. Planning and Zoning must confirm that your new proposed change for the building or space is approved for the type of business use.
3. This initial Change of Occupancy permit may eventually require additional permits to make modifications to the space in order to comply with the current codes.
4. After the permit is issued, an inspection of the property by BID and Fire Safety must be requested by the owner or owners' representative. If the inspections reveal deficiencies or code violations, they must be corrected before the Certificate of Occupancy will be issued.
5. Signs require a separate permit application.
6. Any remodeling or renovations require a separate permit application.
7. An electrical permit or a plumbing permit may be required to bring the electrical and/or plumbing up to code. These permits must be obtained by a State of Florida licensed contractor in those fields.
8. Changes of Occupancy may result in handicapped accessibility requirements related to entrances, accessible route to altered areas, at least one accessible restroom for

each sex, accessible telephones and drinking fountains, and when possible, accessible parking.

9. Fire Safety Inspections must be called in prior to calling for the Building Inspection. Building Inspections should be scheduled for the following day. All inspections can be made by calling (850) 595-3550.
10. All violations/corrections shall be corrected prior to re-inspection or issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

In granting a Change of Occupancy Permit, the following steps indicate the sequence of approvals before a new Certificate of Occupancy can be issued:

1. Land Use Compliance Certificate;
2. Change of Use Permit;
3. Fire Safety Inspection
4. Environmental Permit (if applicable); and
5. Building Inspection.

WHEN THE ABOVE IS COMPLETED AND THE BUILDING SPACE IS READY TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE NEW TENANT, CALL (850) 595-3550 FOR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY INSPECTIONS. NO OCCUPANCY MAY OCCUR UNTIL AFTER THE INSPECTION IS COMPLETE AND THE BUILDING IS IN COMPLIANCE.