



CHANGE OF USE / CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

DESCRIPTION

Building code regulations determine occupancy classifications for every use that occurs within a structure. For example, office uses have a Business Group (B) occupancy and structures provided with sleeping areas have a Residential Group (R) occupancy. Changing the use of a building or facility may involve an extensive remodel or may require no physical changes at all.

Any time there is a proposed change in the use of a building or space the City is required to review the building/space to ensure that zoning requirements, fire, structural, and other building code requirements are met - primarily for health and safety reasons. A new occupancy classification and an associated Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the City once code compliance is demonstrated.

It is the building and/or property owner's responsibility to apply for a new Certificate of Occupancy when a change of use is proposed.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Building Permit Application
2. Site Plan: label streets, property lines, setbacks, parking layout, ADA access, and building location.
3. Floor Plan: label uses of each room or space, include the location of all exits and indicate direction of door swing, and show fire extinguisher locations. If stairs are used to exit the space show if it is a fully enclosed or open stairway. If you have, or are proposing, a multi-tenant building you need to show your tenant locations within the building and label each tenant's business type, address and suite number.
4. Project Description: provide a detailed, written description of your business that includes (but is not limited to) operating hours, number of employees, and typical number of customers.
5. Building Information: provide the construction type of the building, occupant load of the existing and new space(s), square footage of existing and proposed uses, total square footage of the building, and building height.
6. Plumbing Information: show the number and location of all existing and proposed plumbing fixtures (toilets, sinks, drinking fountains, etc).
7. A \$150.00 fee is charged with the submittal of Change of Use Permits and applicants are charged \$75.00/per hour when these permits take more than two (2) hours to review and approve.

PROCESS AND TIMING

Once all of the above-listed items are submitted, the City typically responds to applicants in a week or less. Once the occupancy review is complete the City will schedule an inspection of the building. A new Certificate of Occupancy can be issued only after approval of the submitted items and passing the required inspection(s).

OTHER NOTEWORTHY ITEMS

- Other permits, may be required depending on improvements to the building. For example, a sign permit for the new business or an electrical permit for new lighting. A permit technician can help you determine what will be required.
- Restaurants and other food related businesses must also receive approval from Skagit County Public Health. It is recommended you contact Public Health as early as possible, because their requirements may affect your application to the City - their phone number is (360) 416-1500.
- A Certificate of Occupancy review may trigger additional requirements to bring the building into compliance with codes for the specific use (i.e. structural analysis, accessibility standards, etc).

The purpose of this handout is to assist the public in complying with detailed permit submittal requirements. It is NOT a complete list of permit or code requirements and should NOT be used as a substitute for applicable laws and regulations. It is the responsibility of the owner/design professional to review the submittal for completeness and applicability to other codes. Only complete applications can be accepted by the City for review.

