



Escambia County Building Inspections Division
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CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY/USE GUIDELINES

The State of Florida requires a new Certificate of Occupancy to be issued when an existing building changes its use or occupancy type. All Changes in Occupancy or Use types requires you complete a Building Permit Application and receive a Change of Occupancy Permit even if no alterations are being done. Following issuance of the Change of Occupancy Permit, a Building and Fire Safety Inspection will be necessary prior to issuance of a New Certificate of Occupancy.

If there is a change in the occupancy classification or use, as defined in the Florida Building Code, the proposed building or space shall be made to comply with all current codes including accessibility provisions. [Ref: Florida Existing Building Code 305 State Fire Codes NFPA 1, NFPA 101]

Examples of changes of building uses and occupancies:

Print shop (business) to retail store (mercantile) or House (Residential) to daycare (institutional)

The following Building Occupancy or Use Classifications Require Signed and Sealed Drawings

A (Assembly) **F** (Factory) **E** (Educational) **R** (Residential) **I** (Institutional) **H** (Hazardous)

These requirements are applicable to a Change of Occupancy/ Use:

1. Planning and Zoning must confirm that your new proposed change for the building or space is approved for the type of business use.
2. A permit application must be completed along with design drawings showing current floor plan.
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 new 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. There 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 the IVR at (850) 471-6640.
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 Verification Compliance
2. Change of Occupancy /Use Permit
3. Fire Safety Field Inspection
4. Building Field Inspection.

WHEN THE ABOVE IS COMPLETED AND THE BUILDING SPACE IS READY TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE NEW TENANT, CALL THE IVR (850) 471-6640 FOR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY INSPECTIONS. NO OCCUPANCY MAY OCCUR UNTIL AFTER THE INSPECTION IS COMPLETE AND THE BUILDING IS IN COMPLIANCE.