



Development Services

Service First Bulletin #100

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY PROCESS

PURPOSE

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) created this Service First Bulletin (SFB) 100 to inform our customers of the Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) process. This new process is intended to simplify the existing requirements and facilitate faster business start-up for specific occupancy classifications and uses. This process will be effective March 1st, 2023.

SCOPE

The Department processes a variety of CofO application types. The following business rules will help customers understand our processes and communicate the Departmental performance goals associated with document submittal, plan review, and inspection turnaround times.

CofO Type	Application Intake Process	Plan Review Requirements	Plan Review Performance Goal	Inspection Performance Goal
Business Name Change Only (Existing CofO)	Same Day**	Non-Applicable**	Same Day	Non-Applicable
Occupancy Load Request Only (Existing CofO)		Plan review or optional inspection request	5 business days	Next business day as scheduled
Same Classification and same Use (Existing CofO)		Non-Applicable**	Non-Applicable	
Change of Classification or change of Use		**The following Classifications/Uses will require scale or dimensioned floor plans: Assembly, Educational, Hazardous Storages, Mercantile, Warehouse, Factory, Recycling Facilities, Sexually Oriented Business	5 business days	
Initial CofO Application				

*****Note: The Building Official may request additional information deemed necessary including plans, diagrams, parking plans, specifications, a detailed description of the use or occupancy that will be operated, services offered/produced, and City, County, or Federal license/registration to determine minimum compliance.***

Checklist. The Department encourages applicants to utilize the [DSD CofO Checklist](#) as a guide when submitting. The Checklist is intended to help customers provide all the necessary documentation needed to process an application. Missing items and documents from the Checklist will result in delayed processing.

Zoning and Parking Requirements. As part of each CofO application the applicant will be required to submit a notarized statement indicating the intended use of space and land use. This will help staff determine the applicable land use and confirm whether the business is allowed at the requested location. It is recommended that applicants schedule a commercial consultation with our Customer Advocate Team prior to applying.

To scale or dimensioned parking site plans may be required when new CofO applications (no CofO on record) are submitted or when the occupancy classification/use change and will potentially increase parking requirements. For example, a former Tax Office (Business) space is now being occupied as a retail shop (Mercantile) or restaurant (Assembly). Parking site plans will not be required when the classification or use remain unchanged, an existing CofO is on record with the Department, and parking requirements are not expected to increase or will decrease.

DSD partners with City Departments to ensure building, fire, traffic, and community safety. As such the following classification/uses are examples of when a parking site plan may be required:

- Assembly spaces, restaurants, bars, dancehalls, etc.
- Commercial Amusement uses

Business Name Change Only (Existing CofO). The CofO DBA name change process is only applicable when the existing owner or tenant has a current permitted CofO on record with the Department. This request is appropriate when the current owner or tenant is not changing, the classification or use of the existing space will not change, and the applicant wishes to change their business name only. A business name change is not required by the Department if the owner or tenant remain the same. This request is typically requested by an applicant seeking to align their CofO documentation with their new business name. The fee associated with this process is \$30.00.

Occupancy Load Request Only (Existing CofO). The assignment of occupant load is critical to the safe use of occupied structures/spaces. Occupant loads are consistently used throughout the International Code Council Building Related Codes to design and size means of egress, determine if fire protection systems are required, ventilation rates, plumbing fixture counts, and occupancy classification.

The request for an occupant load assignment occurs when the existing owner or tenant has a current permitted CofO on record with the Department but for some reason an occupant load was not assigned by the Department at the time of initial CofO issuance.

The applicant may submit to scale or dimensioned plans, so the Department can assign an occupant load through the plan review process. The Department will perform the plan review and assign an occupant load within five (5) business days of application. As an option, the customer may request a complementary building inspection so the Department may visit and assess the occupant load. There is no fee associated with this either of these processes. This process is not intended to increase or reduce occupant loads of legally established/existing businesses.

Same Classification and Use (Existing CofO). The request for this CofO application occurs when a new owner or new tenant occupies a space where the former classification or use does not change, and the Department has a valid CofO on record. For example, a former Tax Office (Business) space is now being occupied as a Real-estate Broker (Business). The fee associated with this process is \$280.00 or \$401.00. The higher rate is assessed when a Health Inspection is required.

Please note, there are certain types of occupancies/businesses that will trigger the new owner or tenant to apply for a new CofO even if the classification or use does not change. The following classification/uses are examples but not limited to when a new CofO would be required. To scale or dimensioned floor plans for the following will be required along with any additional documentation to confirm building/fire safety requirements:

- Assembly Occupancies (Bars, Night Clubs, Dancehalls, etc.)
- Storage/Warehouses
- Hazardous Occupancies
- Factory/Recycling Facilities
- Sexually Oriented Businesses

Initial or Change of Classification/Use (New CofO). The request for this CofO application occurs when a new owner or new tenant occupies a space where there is no CofO on record with the Department or when classification/use will be changing. For example, a former Tax Office (Business) space is now being occupied as a retail shop (Mercantile).

CofO requests that require a plan review will be assigned an occupant load within five (5) business days of application once the applicant submits all required information. CofO requests that do not require a review will be assigned an occupant load at time of inspection. Inspections will be performed on the next business day as scheduled by the applicant. Once all required inspections have been performed, the owner or tenant will receive their CofO. The fee associated with this process \$280.00 or \$401.00. The higher rate is assessed when a Health Inspection is required.

Expedited Plan Review Option. The Department has established these performance goals to communicate with customers permitting predictability and to consistently measure permitting turnaround times. However, customers may request an expedited review. This service will be provided with the addition of an overtime plan review fee. The permit application and customer will receive higher priority for review than typically provided in the normal review process by staff who are able to work afterhours. An overtime review will be allowed at the discretion of the

Building Official and based on availability of staff. The fee for overtime plan review per speciality is \$250.00 an hour. Fees are to be paid at time of application and are non-refundable.

SUMMARY

This Bulletin is intended for information purposes only and the Department reserves the right to administer the CofO process. The Building Official may request additional information deemed necessary including plans, diagrams, parking plans, specifications, a detailed description of the use or occupancy that will be operated, services offered/produced, and City, County, or Federal license/registration to determine minimum compliance. We wish to help business owners understand their CofO options as well as communicate our commitment to facilitating business start-up. If you have any questions or concerns related to this process, please feel free to email the Director at buildingofficial@dallascityhall.com.

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