



## Occupancy Certificate

When you establish your business, church, agency, school or organization in a new or existing building, you need a Certificate of Occupancy **before** you open your doors. Certificates of Occupancy also are required for parking lots and commercial storage buildings. They are not required for one- and two-family homes.

If you want to find out if there is an Certificate of Occupancy for your business, you may inspect the property record files at the Milwaukee Development Center, first floor, 809 N. Broadway. If you believe a certificate was issued since 1997, you can check permit files on the internet using the following link:

<http://city.milwaukee.gov/DNSNSS>

Applications for Certificates of Occupancy are accepted at the Development Center, located on the 1st floor at 809 N. Broadway. The Development Center is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may apply by mail; to have an application sent to you, call (414) 286-8211; at the prompt, press "4" and leave a message indicating you need a Certificate of Occupancy application.

The fee for a Certificate of Occupancy varies depending on the proposed use, the size of the space occupied, the amount of time the space was vacant, and other variables. You may contact the Development Center Plan Examination staff at (414) 286-8210 to determine the fee for your specific situation. There is an additional \$3 processing fee for each Certificate of Occupancy application.

When you apply for a Certificate of Occupancy:

- Staff check the City's zoning ordinance to determine whether the use you plan for the property is permitted at that address. If the use is *not permitted*, or if it is classified as a *special use*, you must seek authorization from the Board

of Zoning Appeals. This generally takes about 6-8 weeks.

- In most cases, the application triggers inspection of the property by plumbing, construction, and electrical inspectors to determine whether the space has code violations. When applicable, sprinkler, elevator, hazardous and boiler inspectors also make inspections. Information about scheduling these inspections is found in the customer information sheet, "Occupancy Inspections."

- Different requirements of the State building code apply to different property uses. For instance, a day care center inspection differs from an office or factory inspection, because the code has different requirements for all these uses.

- If inspectors find the property does not comply with the applicable building codes, inspectors will issue orders to make needed repairs. Inspectors must return to approve the work.

- Once all necessary work has been completed, when the inspectors give their OK, and after the Board of Zoning Appeals has acted (if required), Development Center staff issue the Certificate of Occupancy and mail it to the applicant. If you wish to pick up your certificate in person, *please call in advance* to make sure it is ready. Call (414) 286-8207.

**Occupancy of the premises before approval of the Certificate of Occupancy may result in fines of \$150 to \$5,000 per day and an order to vacate the premises per section 200-42-5 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.**



## Occupancy Inspections

809 N. Broadway Milwaukee, WI 53202-3617 414-286-8211

Once you have applied for a certificate of occupancy, a team of inspectors will check the premises you wish to occupy, to determine if there are building code violations that would endanger safety or health. The occupancy certificate cannot be issued until the inspections are completed.

To make appointments for these inspections, call the district inspectors to schedule appointments. Inspectors are available by phone on weekdays early in the morning. You must schedule appointments for three inspections:

- Construction inspection  
286-2513 from 7:30 to 9 a.m.
- Electrical inspection  
286-2532 from 7:30 to 9 a.m.
- Plumbing inspection  
286-3361 from 7 to 9 a.m.
- Zoning inspection – 286-2557

It may be necessary to schedule additional inspections by boiler, hazardous, elevator and sprinkler inspectors. During the initial inspection, the district inspectors will determine the need for additional inspections.

Please be prepared for the inspectors when they visit.

- The applicant or his or her representative must accompany the inspectors.
- Provide keys to all areas of the space to be occupied, including the furnace, boiler, electric meter and water meter rooms.
- If inspectors need to visit space that is occupied by tenants, be sure to obtain the tenant's permission in advance.

- If the premise is protected by security personnel or has an alarm system, inform the security personnel or make arrangements to disarm the alarm system during the inspection.
- All mechanical systems (heating, lighting, hoods, sprinklers, plumbing, etc.) should be completely installed and operational before the inspection.

If you intend to sell, serve or process food or beverages, you may need additional permits. Check with the Milwaukee Health Department, (414) 286-3674.

If you intend to sell or manufacture any product or service, you may need additional permits or licenses. Check with the License Division of the Office of the City Clerk, (414) 286-2238.

After all inspections have been completed and approved, it will take at least three working days to process your certificate of occupancy. The certificate will be mailed to you as soon as it is ready. If you wish to pick up your certificate in person, ***please call in advance*** to make sure it is ready. Call the Milwaukee Development Center, (414) 286-8211. The Development Center is located at 809 N. Broadway, 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

**WARNING: OCCUPANCY OF THE PREMISES BEFORE APPROVAL OF THE OCCUPANCY CERTIFICATE MAY RESULT IN FINES OF \$150 TO \$5,000 PER DAY AND AN ORDER TO VACATE THE PREMISES PER SECT. 200-42-5 OF THE MILWAUKEE CODE OF ORDINANCES.**

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