



## Occupancy certificate

When you establish your business, church, agency, school or organization in a new or existing building, you need an occupancy certificate **before** you open your doors. Occupancy certificates 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 occupancy certificate 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 Internet permit files at <http://www.ci.mil.wi.us/citygov/dns/main/proper tydata/nss/bistart.html>.

Applications for occupancy certificates 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 an occupancy certificate application. The fee is \$200 for spaces of less than 10,000 square feet, and \$400 for spaces of 10,000 square feet or more. There is an additional \$3 processing fee. The fee may be less if the property has been used for the same purpose within the last six months.

When you apply for an occupancy certificate:

- 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 appropriate, 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 occupancy certificate 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) 286-8211; at the first prompt, press "5." At the second prompt, press "6."

**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 section 200-42-5 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.**