



Courtesy Inspection Program

When an existing building or space within a building is being considered for a future business, it is important that the interested party has as much information as possible before making a decision to enter into a purchase agreement or lease. The Courtesy Inspection Program was designed to reduce the amount of risk involved in re-using existing buildings by identifying major building code and zoning code issues that can result in costly upgrades and delays.

This Courtesy Inspection ordinance was designed to offer an inspection of a building or tenant space for the purpose of providing information about the existing building that may present an impediment to the proposed use of the building or space. Alarm systems, fire suppression systems, ADA accessibility, boilers, building structure, electrical systems, elevators, plumbing systems, deferred maintenance and well as zoning code limitations can all impact the time and expense business owners incur when opening a new business location. A courtesy inspection can provide the business owner with valuable information about a location before a commitment is entered to purchase or lease.

The Courtesy Inspection ordinance

Milwaukee Code of Ordinances 200-13-6. Commercial Building Courtesy Inspections. The commissioner may make courtesy inspections of existing commercial buildings, as requested by the building owner or any other interested party, to ascertain if the building structures or equipment would require alterations, modifications, additions, repairs or other updates before the building, or space within the building, could be legally occupied for a particular type of use. The commissioner may charge a fee for this inspection as provided in s. 200-33.

Commercial Courtesy inspection fees

The base fee for a commercial building courtesy inspection is \$254.00

Courtesy Inspection Process

- A business owner can apply for a Courtesy Inspection at the City of Milwaukee Development Center, 809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Please allow 30 minutes to complete an application.
- Applicants will need to provide the following information to request a Courtesy Inspection: Address of the property including the unit number (if applicable). The proposed use of the space, i.e. what type of business or activity will be conducted within the building or space. It will be important to include all proposed uses. The building and zoning codes contain different and sometimes multiple requirements that are dependent upon the use. Applicants should be prepared to provide as much detail as possible to assure their Courtesy Inspection provides them enough information to make a sound business decision. Depending on the proposed use of the building or space a series of other questions will be asked. Here is an example of a few of the more commonly asked questions: How many people are expected to be in the business during regular business hours including employees and customers?

What type of equipment will be used within the space? What type of materials or merchandise will be stored and/or sold?

- Staff will perform a zoning check. The use of buildings is regulated by the City's zoning code. The City is divided into many different districts and each district has a zoning designation. The zoning designation of the district in which your building resides will impact the type of uses that are allowed at that location. Staff will check to see if your proposed use is a permitted use, a limited use, special use or a prohibited use under the City's zoning code. There is a process to appeal zoning designations and/or request authorization for a special use. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) hears these cases and has the authority to grant a Special Use.
- The building or tenant space is inspected by DNS Construction Trades Division inspectors to determine what items need to be brought into compliance with the code for the proposed use. A Field Inspection Report (FIR) will be provided which will provide an overview of the modifications, upgrades, and repairs that will be required before the building can be occupied. This information is not intended to identify every design detail or code requirement for the building or space.
- The perspective business owner can use the information from the Field Inspection Report to make a purchase or lease decision.
- If the perspective business owner makes a decision to move forward with the selected location. It may be necessary to retain the services of a design professional to prepare detailed plans and specifications for the alterations needed to prepare the building or space for your business. Before a business can occupy a building or space, it will be necessary to obtain an occupancy permit, Board of Zoning Approval (if necessary) and any applicable license.

Key items of the Occupancy process

A Certificate of Occupancy for a building or space must be obtained before the space can be occupied. Applications for a Certificate of Occupancy can be made at the Development Center located at 809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202. The fee for the full Occupancy Permit is based on the amount of square footage being used. If the square footage is less than 10,000 sq. ft. the fee will be \$225.00; if the square footage is 10,000 square feet or more, the fee is \$425.

Note: An additional administrative fee, surcharge fee and sales tax will be added to all permit and plan review fees.

An application for a Certificate of Occupancy may require inspections from multiple trade areas including construction, electrical, plumbing, elevator, sprinkler, boiler, etc.

Remodeling, Alterations, Rehabilitation, or Additions

The building or space will require plans and permits if the business owner is planning to alter, rehabilitate, remodel, or add an addition. If the space is 50,000 cubic feet or greater, a licensed professional must prepare the plans.

Applications for these permits are obtained at the Development Center or online through the Land Management System (LMS) at milwaukee.gov/LMS. Before any work can begin, plans must be submitted and permits obtained.



How to start the process:

Visit the Development Center at 809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202 or call (414) 286-8210 to begin. Courtesy Inspections are available via a separate application. They are also for special circumstances and/or conditions requiring a pre-inspection of a particular proposed occupancy and/or construction type. These inspections are performed upon request after a separate Courtesy Inspection application is secured.

To schedule a Courtesy Inspection:

1. After applying for the Courtesy Inspection, the DNS Construction Division will arrange a date and time for the inspectors to visit the site with the owner or owner's representative. The general contact number for the Construction Section is (414) 286-2513. The district construction inspector's name and contact information will be listed on the Courtesy Inspection form. Inspectors are generally available by phone at 7:30-9:30 a.m. and 3:00-4:30 p.m.
2. Depending on the building, proposed use, size of building, building components, etc. it may be necessary for multiple inspectors to inspect the building or space to provide a complete overview. Each inspector will assess the building and provide you a Field Inspection Report (FIR). The FIR will identify the major impediments you will need to address before occupancy of the building or space. The Courtesy Inspection is not intended to identify every detail or every code requirement. The intent is to identify significant deficiencies in the building or space (based on the applicant's proposed use) that will add a significant cost to their plan to occupy the space. It will still be necessary for the applicant to obtain the services of a professional to prepare plans and specifications for their project.



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Courtesy Inspections

A program to help businesses learn all the facts before they begin a project



- Learn what codes will apply
- Review the steps needed to begin planning and then construction
- Tips to keep your timetable on track
- Avoid errors that cause delays and costs
- Who to contact for inspections



milwaukee.gov/DNS