



COMMERCIAL CHANGE OF USE

Did you know a Change of Use permit and a new Certificate of Occupancy is required when a commercial use is changed in an existing building?

What is a Change of Use?

Every building is given an occupancy classification as determined by Chapter 3 of the International Building Code (IBC). Each classification has different code requirements based on the uses within the building. A change of use is when there is a change in the authorized occupancy type of the building that would amend the way the IBC characterizes the use or occupancy of the building. Most often buildings are constructed to the minimum applicable codes for the original use of the structure. Thus, there is a need to review plans and inspect the modifications made when the use of a building changes to ensure the building can support the life safety, parking, and zoning requirements of the new occupancy type. For example, a daycare will have different fire wall, separation, fire sprinklers, and egress requirements than a retail store or office. Restaurants that are wanting to increase the seating capacity may also be subject to a Change of Use. A design professional, such as an architect, may be necessary to help prepare building plans.

It is important to keep in mind that the legal use of the building may not be the most recent actual use, so a Change of Use permit may be required even if you do not plan to make changes or remodel the building. Feel free to contact the Community Development Department for questions as this may avoid delays and save time and money. Our goal is to partner with businesses and maximize your success while complying with building/fire life safety and zoning requirements.

Does my project need a Change of Use Permit?

To determine if a Change of Use permit will be required, you must first find out the legal use of the building. If you are unsure, the Community Development Department can assist you.

If the existing legal use is retail, and a new retail store is being proposed, a Change of Use still may be required. Also, a Remodel Permit is required for most interior and exterior improvements. If the Certificate of Occupancy is not consistent with the intended use of the building then a Change of Use permit will be required. For more information, please fill out the Commercial Remodel/Change of Use Questionnaire and be prepared to discuss it with Community Development Staff.