



Change of Occupancy Residential to Commercial

Background

The City strongly encourages applicants intending to apply for a “Change of Occupancy” permit to check with the Hillsboro Planning Department prior to submitting their permit application. Applicants should verify that the new use is allowed by the applicable zone and that the new use/occupancy complies with parking and development standards.

A “Change of Occupancy” applies to the use of a building only, and should not be confused with any process by the Zoning Code to change the use of a property. Building occupancy classifications addresses the impact of the building on the occupants of the building, whereas zoning use classifications tend to focus on the impact of the use on the surrounding properties.

The Building Code classifies how a building is used into different categories or “occupancies”. Whenever the use of any part of a building changes from one occupancy classification to another a Change of Occupancy Permit is required. For example, a change of occupancy is required to use a retail building (an M occupancy) as a school (an E occupancy) or to enlarge the seating in a restaurant from less than 50 (a B occupancy) to more than 50 (an A-2 occupancy).

When the occupancy of a building is changed, the Building Code requires that the building meet most of all current requirements for that new use. That means that a house (an R-3 occupancy) that is to be changed to an office building must comply with most of all requirements for a new office building.

Process

How do I apply for a change of occupancy permit?

A Change of Occupancy permit is a building permit. Five sets of building plans are required to process your permit. You may turn in your plans and pay the required plan review fee at the Building department (located on the fourth floor of the Civic Center at 150 E Main St). At that time you will be assigned a permit number that will be used for tracking your permit.

We recommend that you submit a fee estimate to the Building department so you have an idea of possible development fees/taxes that may be incurred due to the change of



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occupancy you are proposing. You can find the fee estimate form at the following link - <http://www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/building/Documents/Fee-Estimate-Commercial.pdf>

What information must be shown on the plans?

Building plans for a Change of Occupancy Permit must be neatly drawn and to scale (graph paper may be acceptable in the case of simple buildings). The plans must show existing conditions as well as any proposed changes. (In the case of some existing buildings, “as-built” plans may be available from the Building department.

Typical plans that would be required for a change of occupancy include:

1. A scaled site plan to show the address, size of the building and its location in relation to the property lines and street, relative elevation dimensions to show differences in elevations on the lot, other structures on the property, paved driveways and parking, landscaping, amount of existing and proposed impervious surfaces and a north arrow on the plan to show orientation.
2. A floor plan for each level including basements and storage attics, proposed use of each room, overall room dimensions, window sizes and how windows open, size of exit doors and door hardware type, door landings, both inside and outside stairs, and stair landings.
3. A floor framing plan to show the size and lengths of floor joists and their supports.
4. Stair details must show rise and run of all steps, handrails and their height, and headroom at stairs. (Both handrail height and headroom are measured straight up from the nosing of the stair treads.)
5. A cross section of the building must be provided except where information concerning ceiling heights, insulation, etc., can be shown elsewhere. In addition, the cross section must show the relationship between the grade outside and the interior floor levels.

What happens after I turn in my plans?

The plans submitted to the building department for permit are routed to various departments which might have some special requirements based on the nature of the proposed change.

For example:

1. The Building department will review for possible additional impact on the sewer system, and you may be charged a fee for increased usage by Clean Water Services.
2. The Planning department will look at the use and possible impact on traffic patterns and required parking. A development review application may be required if additional parking is needed.



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3. The Engineering department evaluates impervious surfaces for all residential accounts that convert to commercial for CWS, and assures that any driveway curb cuts will be located and constructed properly. A separate permit will be issued for any work in the public right-of-way.
4. The Water Department will evaluate the site's water supply backflow/cross connection protection (premise isolation).
5. The Structural Plan Reviewer will determine whether your particular change of occupancy will result in a structural evaluation for the building to meet today's building codes.
6. The Electrical Plan Reviewer does not review most plans submitted for building permit. However, we suggest that you verify with a licensed electrical contractor if there will be any special requirements requiring plan review. A separate electrical plan review shall be required for any H (hazardous), E (educational or day care), A (assembly), SR (licensed special residential), I (institutional), and certain medical care occupancies.

How long will it take to get my permit?

The amount of time required to obtain a Change of Occupancy Permit varies, depending on the current workload and on the complexity of the project. A simple change of occupancy requiring no type of waiver or appeal may go through the system in a few weeks. In cases where special zoning approvals are necessary, a Change of Occupancy Permit may take several months. Responding to requests for information as quickly and comprehensively as possible is the best way for you to speed up the process.

What happens once my permit is issued?

Inspections are required for a Change of Occupancy Permit as for any other Building permit—even if no action is to be done. You must arrange for an inspection by calling the 24-hour recording line on the permit card. Once the job had been inspected and approved by the Building Inspector, a new "certificate of Occupancy" will be provided to you, for your records.



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