



Certificate of Occupancy Requirements and Issuance Process

- A Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is a document issued by the Building Division which certifies that a commercial space or newly constructed residential building has been inspected for compliance with the California Building Standards Code and local ordinances which govern construction and occupancy.
Downey Municipal Code 8999.40. Use and Occupancy- No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and no change in the existing use or occupancy classification of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made, until the Building Official has issued a certificate of occupancy therefor as provided herein. Issuance of a certificate of occupancy shall not be construed as an approval of a violation of the provisions of this code or of other ordinances of the jurisdiction.
The City of Downey issues the Certificate of Occupancy to the tenant space or building, not to the specific business or tenant. Should a tenant vacate a location, and another business of the same use & occupancy take possession of the space without making any modifications requiring a building permit, the existing C of O remains in effect.

Table with 2 columns: Projects That Require A Certificate of Occupancy and Projects That Do Not Require A Certificate of Occupancy. Rows include: newly constructed building, interior finish of a shell, addition/alteration increasing occupiable area, tenant improvement, and change of ownership/tenancy.

- When a commercial space is modified and a building permit is required, the city will conduct a record search to determine if a new Certificate of Occupancy must be issued. If no new C of O is required, the existing C of O on file will remain in effect.
A new C of O is required when the use or occupancy change, and/or there is an addition or alteration that results in increased occupiable space.

Duplicate Certificate of Occupancy

- A duplicate Certificate of Occupancy may be issued if permit research can verify that the use & occupancy classification has not changed.
If a copy of the original Certificate of Occupancy is not available within the Building Division archive, a Request for Certificate of Occupancy may be submitted. The request shall include all supporting documentation, such as: a copy of the business license, a copy of the Inspection Record Card, and any other pertinent information for City review.

Fee: 30-minute minimum at the hourly rate for permit research listed in the current Building fee schedule.

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Certificate of Occupancy for Existing Buildings

To request a copy of a Certificate of Occupancy for an existing building, email the request to the City of Downey Building Division at BuildingDept@downeyca.org, with 'Certificate of Occupancy' in the subject line. Please provide as much information as possible to assist our staff in finding a Certificate of Occupancy; including the project address, permit number/s, and approximate date of project completion.

Procedure When There Is No Certificate of Occupancy on File

1. Obtain a business license, or provide a copy of existing business license.
2. Plan Review – Submit a detailed site plan and floor plan, noting the use of each space within the facility. The plan review will verify that the proposed occupancy classification complies with current code.
Fee: 30-minute minimum at the hourly plan check rate listed in the Building fee schedule.
3. Permit and Inspection Requirements - After the plan review is completed, a permit will be issued. The applicant must then schedule an inspection to verify that conditions match the approved plan.
Fee: 1-hour minimum at the permit/inspection rate listed in the Building fee schedule.
4. Construction Work Without Permits - Permits must be obtained for all construction work that cannot be substantiated by permit history. All permits issued will be subject to current codes.

Please be advised; in all cases, the issuance of a new Certificate of Occupancy will be contingent upon the verification of compliance with all applicable city requirements.

What should be done with the Certificate of Occupancy once it is issued?

The Certificate of Occupancy shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises and shall not be removed except by the Building Official.

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