

GUIDE

OCCUPANT LOAD VERIFICATION

GUIDE OVERVIEW

This guide is intended to assist the applicant with their drawing requirements for a building permit application. This is only an example of the information required for a drawing set submission, and is not intended to be reproduced for a building permit application.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

This is a general list consolidating common requirements compiled for information only and should not be considered a complete list.

- Applicant to engage a professional when preparing drawings for this application.
- Substandard drawings will not be accepted.
- Permit drawings must provide sufficient information to describe the full scope of work.
- Submissions are required to comply with the latest version of the British Columbia Building Code and applicable City of Coquitlam bylaws and regulations.
- All drawings are to be neat, to scale and of draftsman quality.
- Metric or Imperial standard may be used, but not mixed.
- Agent Authorization Form (if applicable).
- Referral to Coquitlam Fire/Rescue may be required.

SUBTRADES

All subtrade permits shall be obtained by a certified trade contractor, licensed in the City of Coquitlam. Please note, the City of Coquitlam, issues plumbing and sprinkler permits however electrical and gas permits are applied for through Technical Safety BC. Electrical Information such as load calculation and single line diagram showing the size and type of service equipment, grounding, over current devices, feeders, branch circuits, distribution panels and electrical room layout may be required. Depending on the extent of new plumbing work proposed, information regarding size of water pipes, plumbing vent termination and sanitary tie-ins may also be required.

Note: Upgrading some services may be required as well, depending on the changes being made. Some examples of what this may include are: fire alarms, exit signs, emergency lighting, fire separations, exiting, water closets and parking.

PERMIT SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Two complete sets of drawings minimum format 24" x 36" at a scale of 1/4"=1'.
- Site Plan at a scale of 1/8"=1'.
- Land Title Document.

FEES

Per the City of Coquitlam's [Fees and Charges Bylaw](#), you will have to pay an application fee when you apply. The permit fee is based on the calculated construction and is payable when the permit is ready to be picked up and issued. The fees are broken down as follows:

- 25% of the permit value when the application is made.
- Balance of the permit value when the permit is issued.

INSPECTIONS

Complete information on inspections can be found on our [Inspections page](#).

- Buildings and/or structures requiring a building permit will also require inspections performed by City Building Officials.
- Plumbing permits for new plumbing systems and services will require inspections by City Plumbing Officials.
- Inspection by Coquitlam Fire/Rescue may be required.

PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR FURTHER REQUIREMENTS FROM FIRE RESCUE

This information is provided for convenience only and is not in substitution of applicable City Bylaws, Provincial or Federal laws and regulations. Always refer to official documents. The City is not responsible for errors found in copies or alterations of this document.

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Revised: Aug. 07, 2015

1.0 PURPOSE

To provide information on how to deal with occupant load requirements as it pertains to buildings, special structures and facilities.

2.0 SCOPE

All members in the Fire Prevention Division fielding questions about or conducting reviews for events and/or situations where occupant load calculations and approvals are required.

3.0 POLICY

Through Article 3.1.17.1, the Building Code specifies the minimum occupant load to which a floor area, or part thereof shall be designed. This specified occupant load provides the basis for the design of the means of egress and health requirements (washrooms) within buildings.

The BC Fire Code specifies the maximum permitted occupant load for any **room** based on the lesser of net floor space per occupant or for which the means of egress has been provided.

It will be the policy of our department to review increased occupant load requests for **individual rooms or spaces** within buildings used for special events over a very short duration (typically one day or less) that exceed the minimum values permitted by the current Building Code or the Building Code of the day that may or may not have been established through a building permit process. It will also be the policy of our department to review seating arrangements only **for outdoor assembly occupancies** that are not regulated by the Building Code and are regulated by the Fire Code.

All other occupant load determinations related to but not limited to the following shall be referred to and reviewed by the City Building Department:

- Permanent occupant load increases for licensed establishments;
- Determination of the occupant loads for floor area and spaces in buildings for the design of washrooms, means of egress and parking; and
- Determination of occupant loads for tents and air supported structures at special events.

(Note: Non-fixed seating arrangements for any of the above situations may be referred to our department for review.)

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The Building Department normally requires that a building permit be obtained for the above noted situations.

Please note that Table 3.1.17.1 of the Building Code specifies the minimum occupant loads for design; however, the Building Code permits higher occupant load designs up to the maximum permitted by the Fire Code.

Where occupant loads have been determined by the Building Department, and exceed those in Table 3.1.17.1, our Division shall be notified of the occupant load for the building for other than licensed beverage establishments. In these cases, DESIGN OCCUPANT LOAD signage as noted on the Office of the Fire Commissioner's (OFC) website shall be installed in a conspicuous location.

4.0 PROCEDURE

If it is determined that an occupant load review is required by our department on the basis of a request or by our own determination if believed advisable, the application and inspection requirements shall be as follows.

1. The applicant shall submit to our department the following for review:
 - a) Two sets of draftsman quality drawings containing the following minimum information/requirements:
 - i) Depiction of the room or space in the building where increased occupant load is requested, including a key plan of the spatial location of the room or space within the overall floor area of the storey;
 - ii) Locations and dimensions of all chairs, tables, other furniture, circulatory space, aisles and relevant equipment in the room;
 - iii) Relevant dimensions of the means of egress facilities serving the room in the pertinent floor area of the building. This shall include locations of room doors, exit doors, exit facilities, corridors, and similar egress facilities. Dimensions of all such facilities shall be provided;
 - iv) Locations of exit signs and pull stations if provided;
 - v) State whether the building has been provided with a sprinkler system and/or a fire alarm system;

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- vi) Indicate the occupant load of the room requested and provide calculations demonstrating compliance with Articles 2.7.1.3 and 2.7.1.5 of the BC Fire Code; and
 - vii) Drawings must be properly dimensioned and to a relevant scale.
 - b) Signed letter to our department stating the following:
 - i) Civic address of the facility;
 - ii) Type of event;
 - iii) Purpose of the request for higher occupant load;
 - iv) Date of the event being held;
 - v) Duration (start and end times) of the event for the increased occupant load request;
 - vi) Proposed lighting levels; and
 - vii) If liquor will be served.
 - c) If liquor is being served, provide the following:
 - i) Proof of permission from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB); and
 - ii) Proof from the City Planning Department that the site in question is permitted to be used as such a facility.
 - d) Signed letter from the owner of the property where the event is occurring granting permission for the occupant load increase.
- 2. The Fire Inspector (FI) reviewing the application shall:
 - a) At the time the application is received, date stamp all pages of both sets of drawings and other correspondence from the applicant.
 - b) Label one set of drawings as OFFICE COPY and the other drawing set as APPLICANT COPY.

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- c) Review plans for compliance with Section 2.7 of the BC Fire Code. During the review, the FI shall consider:
 - i) In the calculation or determination of net floor area, a provision for circulatory space such as aisles and pathways for egress shall be deducted from the gross floor space of the room;
 - ii) Whether the occupant load increase will necessitate the installation of a fire alarm system within the building if the occupant load exceeds the limits permitted by Subsection 3.2.4 of the BC Building Code;
 - iii) If the building is sprinklered, whether the means of egress credits normally afforded by the Building Code for sprinklered facilities shall apply in the case of the building being reviewed based on the age of the sprinkler system and whether its design and installation substantially complies with the current Code;
 - iv) If the application substantially complies with the requirements in the building fire safety plan; and
 - v) If additional measures such as fire watch, extra fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, etc. may be required for the event.
- d) Check and review any occupant load permits issued for the building by review of our files and that of the Building Department.
- e) Review the authenticity of the letter of permission from the owner by reasonable means.
- f) If the application is found to be acceptable, the first page of each drawing set shall be:
 - i) Stamped APPROVED;
 - ii) Contain the date, signature and LAFC badge number of the reviewer; and
 - iii) A completed form CFD-FP-20 shall be attached.
- g) Prepare occupant load signage from the OFC website for **MAXIMUM PERMISSIBLE OCCUPANT LOAD**.

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- h) File the application documents within the correct inspectable property file.
 - i) Inform the applicant if the occupant load increase was accepted or denied. If denied, reasons shall be stated.
 - j) Provide applicant with their drawing set, copy of form CFD-FP-20 and occupant load signage.
 - k) Inform the RCMP, Fire Dispatch and the Duty Chief of the event. Fax to RCMP at (604) 552-7303 attention to Watch Commander.
 - l) If the event type is for a rave, large gathering of young people or other event, then additional review and approval of the application will be required by the Assistant Chief Fire Prevention, RCMP and the City Events Coordinator.
 - m) *Record the event as a permit in FDM.*
3. If the application is for an outdoor assembly area, the policy of our department will be to only review the requirements of Sentence 2.7.1.5.(2) of the Fire Code. Maximum permitted occupant loads and egress requirements are not regulated by the Fire Code. For these events, regulatory matters shall be referred to the City Events Coordinator, RCMP, LCLB and Building Department. Notification to our staff shall be as per Item 2(k) above.
4. Our department reserves the right to request that the applicant seek the services of a professional engineer or registered architect to provide occupant load calculations and sealed & signed drawings where it has been determined that those services are necessary due to complexity, high occupant loads or other reasons. Building Code letters of assurance of professional design may also be required to accompany the application.
5. An inspection of the premises may be required to confirm compliance with the applicant's submission. The requirement for an inspection shall be based on the merits of the application. Higher occupant loads and more complex situations will drive the need for an inspection. If the application was supervised by a professional, the FI shall request the appropriate letters of assurance of professional field review at this time, if applicable.