

Occupancy Permit FAQ's

- **Why do I need an occupancy permit through the fire district when I have a permit through the City or Municipality?**
- **Am I required to get a new permit every year?**
- **What will happen if I don't get an occupancy permit?**
- **If I add additional space (i.e. take over another suite as the business expands or add an addition to my building) am I required to get a new permit?**
- **If I relocate to a different suite in the same building am I required to get a new permit?**
- **If I relocate to a different suite in the same building can I move the suite number to my new location so that I don't have to change my letterhead, business cards, etc.?**
- **If the business changes owners but the business name stays the same what do I need to do?**
- **If just the name of the business changes what do I need to do?**
- **What type and how many fire extinguishers will I need?**
- **Do I also need an occupancy permit with the city or county?**
- **If I want to sublease part of the tenant space under my occupancy permit, what do I need to do?**
- **Do I need an occupancy permit to rent a space to store items only?**
- **When do I call for an occupancy inspection?**
- **Do I need to display the Certificate of Occupancy?**

Q: Why do I need an occupancy permit through the fire district when I have a permit through the City or Municipality?

A: State statutes assign the responsibility of fire protection and fire safety to Fire Protection Districts. Therefore, Fire Protection Districts are responsible for adopting and enforcing Fire Codes. Occupancy Permits enable Fire Protection Districts to perform inspections that ensure your building and property complies with the adopted Fire Codes for fire and life safety.

To help insure the safety, health and welfare; and, in general, to secure safety to life and property from all hazards incident to the use and occupancy of all buildings, structures or premises in the Cottleville Fire Protection District, we have adopted Ordinance No. 23 – The Fire Codes for the Fire District.

Cottleville Fire Protection District requires all of our Inspectors to be Missouri State Certified Fire Inspectors. This assures that we have the expertise to recognize potential fire hazards, and to help provide solutions to mitigate these hazards. Further, Cottleville Fire Inspectors have expert knowledge regarding the principles of combustion and fire growth such as the combustion process  or how fire works, phases of fire, heat transfer, flame spread, factors affecting fire growth, fire resistance in construction, fire loads, fire

containment in buildings, elimination of ignition sources and many other fire related matters.

Q: Am I required to get a new permit every year?

A: No you do not have to get an occupancy permit every year. An occupancy permit is valid from the time of issuance until such time that there is a change in business operations or the ownership of the business. Some municipalities require that you have a business license which may require a yearly renewal but the fire district does not.

Q: What will happen if I don't get an occupancy permit?

A: The failure to obtain an occupancy permit is considered an "Unlawful Act" based on Section 114.1 of the 2015 International Building Code as adopted by Ordinance No. 23, and you will be subject to violation penalties of up to \$500.00 per day as outlined in [Section 111.5](#).

Q: If I add additional space (i.e. take over another suite as the business expands or add an addition to my building) am I required to get a new permit?

A: Yes, adding additional space will require an occupancy permit for the new area. The permit certificate shows the number of people (occupancy load) that can be in the space along with the square footage of the space so the existing certificate is no longer valid if any of these factors change. The new space will also require an occupancy inspection to verify compliance with the fire codes.

Q: If I relocate to a different suite in the same building am I required to get a new permit?

A: Yes a new permit is required, because an occupancy permit is issued to a specific address and/or suite and it is not transferrable to another location. A new occupancy permit and an occupancy inspection are required for the new location.

Q: If I relocate to a different suite in the same building can I move the suite number to my new location so that I don't have to change my letterhead, business cards, etc.?

A: No, neither the occupancy permit nor the addresses are transferrable, you will be required to obtain a new occupancy permit for the new location. In accordance with Section 505.1.1 of the 2015 International Fire Code which states; "It shall be unlawful to add, change, and/or relocate any assigned address number(s) for a building, suite, tenant space, etc. as assigned by the agency or department responsible for assigning said address without said assigning agency/department and fire department approvals".

Q: If the business changes owners but the business name stays the same what do I need to do?

A: A change of ownership of a business will require a new occupancy permit to be issued which will require an occupancy inspection to be conducted.

Q: If just the name of the business changes what do I need to do?

A: A change in just the name of the business and nothing else will require the replacement of the Occupancy Permit Certificate that is displayed at the business with a new certificate showing the new name, and there is a fifteen (\$15) dollar charge for the permit card replacement. You will need to fill out an occupancy permit application showing the new name and submit it along with payment and supporting documentation explaining that it is just a business name change.

Q: What type and how many fire extinguishers will I need?

A: There are several factors that affect what type and how many fire extinguishers are needed for a particular business such as the size of the building or space, the type of business, the materials or products being used or stored within the building, etc. It would be difficult to try to provide that information due to all the variables, so we suggest that you contact this department and we will help you to determine what you will need for your specific business and location.

Q: Do I also need an occupancy permit with the city or county?

A: Many cities and counties do require a separate occupancy permit, in addition to the occupancy permit issued by the fire district. Check with the city or county building department in the jurisdiction that you plan to locate to. A cooperative balance between a fire-prevention inspection and your local building department is the most desirable system to ensure code compliance.

Q: If I want to sublease part of the tenant space under my occupancy permit, what do I need to do?

A: Permit requirements for subleasing are considered on a case by case basis so check with your fire district. It is a relatively simple matter for the Fire Marshal to determine if the use of the sublease conflicts with the use stipulated on the Certificate of Occupancy already issued.

Q: Do I need an occupancy permit to rent a space to store items only?

A: Yes. Even though the space may not be occupied with people, the storage of products or materials is still considered occupancy, and therefore an occupancy permit and an occupancy inspection are required to verify code compliance.

Q: When do I call for an occupancy inspection?

A: If the space you are moving into is an existing building or space and your business is the same or similar to that of the previous occupant then you call for an inspection after you have moved all the furniture in and you are ready to operate. If any construction occurred with the building or space you are moving into and a building permit was issued through this department an approved final inspection on the building permit will be required prior to moving in. If your business is of a different use than the previous occupant and/or your business deals with the use of chemicals, flammable liquids, or other potential hazardous materials we suggest that you contact us prior to moving in as a review of the codes may be required to determine if the building or space was designed for your particular occupancy classification. If any code violations are observed during the initial occupancy inspection, a scheduled re-inspection will be necessary to correct any code violations which may be noted during the initial inspection. This is something to consider if you are facing an opening deadline for your business, so give yourself plenty of time.

Q: Do I need to display the Certificate of Occupancy?

A: It is not a requirement that the certificate be displayed. However, we prefer that it be displayed or that it is available for viewing if requested.