

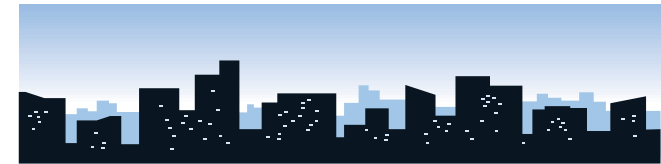
Questions? Please contact our office for more information

Permit and Development Center
Community Development Department
602 Robert D. Ray Drive
515-283-4200



City of Des Moines

How to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy



This brochure is designed to assist you, our customer, in understanding the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) process. It contains the process and some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the Certificate of Occupancy.

What is a Certificate of Occupancy?

A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is a legal document issued by the Permit and Development Center (PDC). The Certificate of Occupancy certifies that a structure is in substantial compliance with the currently adopted Municipal Code, the International Building Codes and all zoning ordinances. It describes the legal use/occupancy of an establishment, legal description, construction type, zoning district, associated permits and special conditions relating to the use of the establishment at the time it was constructed.

When is a Certificate of Occupancy required?

The City of Des Moines has adopted the International Building Code and Residential Code which require that a Certificate of Occupancy be issued for all new construction, change in use or occupancy of an existing building/space, or any additions to existing commercial buildings. Fire-damaged properties also require full inspections and permits but will not be issued a certificate of occupancy once repairs are made.

How to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy?

If you are requesting a Certificate of Occupancy based on the existing use of the building, call our office and request a records search. If we have a CO on file for the building, a copy will be provided for a fee. The Permit and Development Center staff will research existing records and advise you of any records we have on file for the building. There is a fee associated with this research. Keep in mind records for older buildings may not exist. If records do not exist, Permit and Development Center staff will make a determination of prior use and issue a Certificate of Zoning Compliance.

What is a Certificate of Zoning Compliance? A document that states that the use of the building or site is allowed in that particular zoning district. The Certificate of Zoning Compliance does not warrant that the building/structure meets all current code requirements.

If you are obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy through the new construction process, (securing a current building permit) you will need to obtain all required inspections and approvals. If the project requires separate permits for heating, electrical, plumbing, sidewalks, or right of way obstructions, etc., you are also required to have all required inspections/approvals and meet all planning and zoning requirements.

****Requests for building permit inspections are required to be made by the applicant or authorized agent while trade inspections must be requested by the licensed contractor doing the work. All inspection requests should be made directly to the individual inspector. If a site plan was required for the building permit to be issued, zoning inspections are required to verify compliance with the approved site plan. The applicant should also call the PDC for applicable fire inspections to be made.**

Once all inspections have been completed, the Certificate of Occupancy can be issued. **Please contact the Permit and Development Center staff at 515-283-4200 to have the CO for the project issued.**

What is a permit?

A permit is issued by the City of Des Moines authorizing specific work to be completed on a building/structure. The applicant agrees to perform the work in compliance with the adopted Municipal Codes. Plans may be required to be submitted so that a plan review can be completed prior to the issuance of the permit. All fees associated with this permit are based on value of work to be done. ***No work shall be performed prior to the issuance of a permit.***

What is the cost of a Certificate of Occupancy?

For commercial buildings/spaces that are 1,500 sq.ft. or smaller, the fee for the CO is \$20. For buildings/spaces larger than 1,500 sq.ft., the fee is \$50. If application is made for a building permit, the fee is due when the permit is issued and all associated fees are paid. The fee for residential structures is \$25 regardless of size.

How do I obtain a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy?

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued by the Building Official for the use of a portion or portions of a building/structure prior to final completion of the project. The portion or portions of the building/structure must be safe to occupy and not pose any dangerous, life-threatening situations. Common examples include phased construction and landscaping finishes that cannot be installed due to weather. All inspectors for the project must agree and sign off on the temporary CO. ***Please contact the Permit and Development staff at 515-283-4200 to have the temporary CO for the project issued.***



How long is the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy good for?

The duration of the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy will be determined by the Building Official as it relates to the remaining elements of the project yet to be completed. Periods of 60 or 90 days

are often granted. If the project is nearing the expiration date of the building permit, a permit extension may also be required. A written request must be made to the PDC staff for this to be granted. Contact the PDC staff prior to the expiration of the building permit for more information.

What is the cost of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy?

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy comes at an additional charge of \$20 or \$50 based again on the size of the project. It is paid for when it is issued.

Do I need to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy annually?

No. As long as there are not any modifications, additions, alterations or changes in use or occupancy of the structure/establishment, the Certificate of Occupancy remains active.

Additional Information:

If the project involves a commercial structure, the Permit and Development Center staff request that a "Final Code Plan" be submitted. The code plan is used to document the final as-built building for both future use by our department and for fire fighting planning purposes.

To expedite the processing of your certificate of occupancy, please be sure to provide our staff with current, detailed information.

It is our goal to effectively, expeditiously, professionally, and accurately serve all of our customers in everything we do. If you require additional information or assistance regarding the Certificate of Occupancy process, you may contact the Permit and Development Center staff at (515) 283-4200. Please identify if it is a residential or commercial project when calling.