

# Seattle Fire Prevention Division

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## Certificates of Occupancy – Required With New Place of Assembly Permits

A Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is an essential part of the permit review process for issuing assembly permits. A C of O is a document issued by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), previously the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). It certifies a building's compliance with applicable building codes and other laws, indicating it to be in a condition suitable for occupancy. The C of O also contains information about the occupancy load.

Effective August 1, 2016, a copy of the C of O will be required to be submitted at the same time the application for a new place of assembly permit is submitted rather than after the application has already been submitted.

**Why Make the Change?** The permitting process will be more efficient for our customers and our team when the necessary C of O information is available at the time of permit application.

**Which Permits Require a Certificate of Occupancy?** New permits with the following permit codes will require a C of O to be submitted at the time the permit is applied for:

2501 Series Place of assembly, non-profits

2502 Series Place of assembly, occupant load of 100-999

2504 Series Place of assembly, occupant load of 1,000+

**Where Can I Get a Copy of a Certificate of Occupancy Document?** Records from recent years may be researched/printed online at <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>. Applicants can research all available building records at the SDCI Microfilm Library, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave., (206) 233-5180.

**Note:** Historical research can be challenging because building code occupancies have changed significantly over time. C of O's were first required in Seattle in 1956. That means older buildings that have not changed occupancies will not have any C of O records at SDCI. In these cases, customers may need to initiate a new process with SDCI to have a C of O issued. For additional information about C of O's, call SDCI Inspection Services at (206) 684-8950. See also SDCI information sheet #120 on Obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy, stored here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/publications/cam/cam120.pdf> .

**I'm Applying for a New Place of Assembly Permit - How Should I Submit the Certificate of Occupancy Document?** A copy of the certificate should be submitted by email (preferred) to [permits@seattle.gov](mailto:permits@seattle.gov) along with your application materials. Permit applications are available on our website at <http://www.seattle.gov/fire/business-services/permits>.

**Does the Seattle Fire Department Provide Assistance?** Yes. Our permit team can provide general information about the permit application process and our compliance inspectors can provide more code-specific guidance if required. If you need help with a new place of assembly permit, please call our office at (206) 386-1450 and ask to speak with a member of the Permit Team or the Compliance Unit. **Questions regarding Certificates of Occupancy are best directed to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections** at (206) 684-8950 as they issue and maintain these records.