



Change of Use

Changing the use of a building requires that the site and the building comply with all current laws regulating land use and buildings, such as the building, zoning, fire, accessibility, and energy codes. This usually involves structural changes and/or additional fire protection; parking provisions; landscaping; and providing accessibility for the disabled such as access to the building, restrooms, entry doors, service counters and parking. In some cases, the proposed use is simply not allowed at that location or requires such extensive modifications that the change may not be practical. This is most prevalent when a residence is changed to a commercial use, or a commercial use to one involving hazardous materials.

These legal requirements make it important to include a thorough analysis of the uses allowed and the alterations necessary when considering a change of use. Compliance with applicable codes will be verified by City officials before any permit or the required new Certificate of Occupancy is issued. We recommend you contact the Building Services Division, the Planning Services Division, the Fire Prevention Division and the Development Engineering Division for project specific details. (Representatives of each of these units are available at the City's Permit Center.) Have available as much information as possible about the structure's address, current use, current Certificate of Occupancy, proposed use, etc.

Procedures for Change of Occupancy or Use

1. We recommend you hire a person or firm familiar with the building and land use codes to inspect the building and prepare plans which show compliance with current codes for the proposed new use. These plans may need to be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer, and must clearly show existing conditions and proposed alterations. Submittal Requirements are available through the Permit Center online or in the Permit Center.
2. Submit a request in writing for an approval of the proposed change of use when you apply for the building permit. (A building permit is required in nearly all cases for alterations to the structure.) The request must describe in detail both the current/previous use and the proposed new use. Include four (4) complete sets of construction drawings and five (5) copies of a site plan for each request/application. You must pay plan review and zoning fees at the time you apply.
3. City staff in the Departments/Divisions involved will then review the plans. When they have verified compliance with the various codes and appropriate fees have been paid, the building permit will be issued, authorizing the work to commence.
4. Call for inspections. After final approval inspections have verified code compliance, the City will issue a new Certificate of Occupancy. The building may not be occupied for its new use before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, approving the building for occupancy with its new use.