



Development Services/Building Safety Division
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www.lawrenceks.org/pds/building-safety

Overview of Building Permit Certificate of Occupancy Requirements

Building or Building Space Use and Occupancy

In accordance with [Chapter V](#) of the City of Lawrence Code, an official Certificate of Occupancy (or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy) must be issued by the Building Official prior to occupancy of any new building or building space (or addition to a building/building space) constructed under a valid building permit issued by the City of Lawrence Planning & Development Services Department/Building Safety Division. This includes both new residential one- and two-family construction projects and new "commercial" construction projects (commercial construction projects include permits for other than one- and two-family construction projects, including multi-family residential buildings with three or more units).

Except for minor remodeling projects, a Certificate of Occupancy (or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy) is also required prior to occupancy of any reconfigured or substantially altered/remodeled commercial building or building space, and for any change in the Building Code use/occupancy classification of an existing commercial building or building space ("Change of Occupancy"). A Certificate of Occupancy is generally *not* required for one- and two-family residential alteration, remodeling or repair projects.

Stocking of goods, installation of furnishings/equipment or training of employees in new or substantially altered or remodeled (and properly permitted) buildings, structures or spaces; or in existing spaces where a "Change of Occupancy" (Building Code use and occupancy classification) has been authorized under a valid building permit – even though no physical alteration or remodeling will occur – are also considered forms of occupancy requiring issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy).

Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (or Temporary Certificate of Occupancy) shall not be construed as an approval of a violation of the provisions of Chapter V or of other code or ordinances of the jurisdiction.

Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is a document issued by the Building Safety Division upon completion of approved construction of a new building/building space, an addition to a building/building space or an alteration/remodel of an existing commercial building/building space; or for a commercial "Change of Occupancy" building permit (change of Building Code use and occupancy classification), even though no physical alteration or remodeling has occurred. Such CO will be issued by no later than the close of business on the first working day after the final building inspection is completed and approved. A final building inspection approval can only be made after all final mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire and site plan inspections have been completed and fully approved (as required by the issued building permit/s and approved plans for the project), and all required clearances from other City departments have been completed and fully approved.

Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO)

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) may be granted for all or a portion (or portions) of a commercial building/building space when it has been determined that no substantial hazard exists and all required mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire, site and final building inspections are either approved, partially approved or approved with conditions, and all required clearances from other departments and agencies are approved, partially approved or approved with conditions. A TCO may only be issued for a commercial or multi-family residential project (three or more units) subject to the conditions listed on the TCO (and on any referenced attachment/s). One- and two-family residential construction projects are generally not eligible to be granted a TCO.

Visit the City's website at www.lawrenceks.org/pds/building-safety to obtain a [TCO Application Form](#) and other building code, contractor licensing, and building permit and inspection information, or visit our offices at 1 Riverfront Plaza, Suite 110, Lawrence, KS 66044.