



# City of Bedford Ohio, Building Department

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## Policy for Change of Occupancy Plan Submission

### ❖ Introduction:

- This policy is generated to give a general guideline for the change of use approval procedures and required documentation.

### ❖ Code Requirements and References:

- **Section 3402.1 OBC** defines change of occupancy as “a change in the purpose or level of activity within a structure that involves a change in application of the requirements of the code”.

**Not only the change of use and occupancy but also a change in the level of activity while maintaining the same use group will constitute the “change of occupancy”. A change in the level of activity may include increase of occupant loads or path of travel to the means of egress, or additional required equipment or systems etc., that will raise the level of hazard based on life and/or fire risk.**

**Section 3408.1 OBC** states “no change of occupancy shall be made to any building that would place the building in a different division of the same group of occupancy or in a different group of occupancies, unless building is made to comply with the requirements of this code for such division or group of occupancy.

**Please note that a change of occupancy permit CAN NOT be processed through “Application for certificate of use and occupancy” process for existing buildings.**

### ❖ Plan submission and fee requirements:

**Based on the above code sections, the building official has determined that the following documentation and procedures are required for a change of occupancy plan submission:**

- Application form:  
Complete and submit the “City of Bedford Application for Building Plan Approval”
- Plan requirements:
  1. Submit **three (3) sets** of construction drawings sealed by an Ohio registered design professional(s).
  2. For existing buildings **without proposed alterations**, drawings shall show, at a minimum, the existing and proposed use group designations, construction type, existing floor plan with new room names, occupant loads, required means of egress components, existing electrical panel and load information for the new use group, existing mechanical system and equipment, existing plumbing fixtures, and

existing mechanical system and equipment, existing plumbing fixtures, and existing fire protection systems, etc.

3. For existing buildings **with alterations**, in addition to the requirements in item #2 above, drawings shall also show alteration details for each scope of work in the building.

▪ **Plan review and inspection fees shall be charged as follows:**

▪ For existing buildings **with major alterations:**

1. \$100 base fee for **each trade** applicable to the building,
2. The square footage fee shall be based on the **minimum 100 square feet** for **each trade** applicable to the building, see permit application for fee per 100 sf.
3. Complete application for certificate of occupancy.

▪ For existing buildings **with minor alterations:**

1. See permit application for appropriate fee for **each trade** applicable to the building.
2. Complete application for certificate of occupancy.

▪ Inspections:

Regardless if the application included alterations or not, the applicant must call for inspection for each trade applicable to the building. Inspectors shall verify that the existing and/or altered building components are in compliance with the approved plans and applicable building codes for the proposed new use group(s).

▪ **Special clarification:**

For change of occupancy in existing building, the property owner may wish to occupy the existing building for the new use group without any alterations. However, in view of many fire and life safety issues concerning the change of occupancy, the building official has determined that the existing building components shall be evaluated, verified, and drawings prepared by an Ohio registered design professional. These plans shall be submitted to DIC for review and approval for all change of occupancy applications **regardless** if the new use occupancy is more or less hazardous than the existing use occupancy. Because of the complexity of verifying code compliance in existing buildings, the analysis and drawing preparation **cannot be performed by the owner or their contractors**. This information must be verified and submitted by an Ohio registered design professional in accordance with section 106.2.1 OBC.

Please note that once the plan review process is completed, the building official may determine that alterations are required to bring the existing building components up to the current code requirements. Many times these changes may not be anticipated. **It is highly recommended to consult with the building official prior to purchasing or leasing a building or tenant space.**