



Certificate of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is a certificate issued in accordance with the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code by the Fire, Building & Safety Division and the Building Official, that authorizes the occupancy of a building for a specific business or purpose. A CO is required prior to occupancy of a new building or tenant space, prior to a change of occupancy classification of a building or tenant space, or whenever permits have been issued for renovation of a building or tenant space. A CO also signifies zoning approval, meaning that the business is located within an appropriately zoned property in conformance with the City of Russellville's zoning regulations. Businesses cannot commence business operations until the CO and Business License applications are approved and issued by the City of Russellville.

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) may be granted for all or a portion of a commercial building or building space when it has been determined by the Division that no substantial hazard exists, and that all required inspections and clearances have been partially approved, approved with conditions or fully approved. Stocking of goods, installation of furnishings/equipment or training of employees in new or substantially remodeled buildings or spaces requires an officially issued TCO or CO.

Some minor remodeling projects, such as those in which the Building Code use and occupancy classification will not change and the design occupant load will not increase, require only a final building inspection approval without a new CO being required/issued.

The following projects require a CO:

- A newly constructed building or structure built for a specific use and occupant.
- An interior finish of a shell for a specified occupant.
- A tenant improvement for a change in use or change in existing occupancy classification.

Projects that do not qualify for a CO:

- When permits are issued for only plumbing, mechanical or electrical work.
- Building shell or speculative improvement that is not for any specific use.

The final building inspection is the last inspection required before a TCO or CO can be issued (the final building inspection also serves as the TCO or CO inspection). Before scheduling the final building inspection for issuance of a TCO or CO, the General Contractor shall ensure that all required final trade (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, or MEP), final required fire inspections (emergency egress, fire suppression systems, fire alarm systems) and required site plan inspections (including City Engineering and Planning Department inspections and City Corporation Utility inspections, if applicable) have been previously scheduled, completed and approved.

The General Contractor or permit holder should schedule the final inspection for Certificate of Occupancy, with sufficient notice. Inspections can be scheduled through the (1) EnerGov online permitting system, (2) by mobile device or (3) by contacting the Fire, Building & Safety Division office.

Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for any building or tenant space, all of the following must be inspected and approved:

1. Fire protection systems including emergency access.

2. Grade exit lobbies, exit corridors or exit passageways.
3. Elevator shaft enclosures, including a Third Party Elevator inspection for verification and approval of equipment installation.
4. Exit stairs including handrails and guardrails.
5. All required exit lights and emergency lighting, including the emergency generator, if provided.
6. The final report of special inspections, i.e., Dept. of Health, if applicable.
7. All required final inspections for all associated sub trade permits.
8. ADA compliance.
9. All departmental final inspections, including parking lot, drainage, exterior and landscaping.
10. Other items, established during the inspection process, as required for occupancy.
11. Removal of trash and construction debris from in and around the building.
12. Property address using 6" contrasting lettering shall be verified.

In accordance with the Arkansas Fire Prevention Code, after the Building Official inspects the building or structure and finds no violations of the provisions of this code or other laws that are enforced by the Fire, Building & Safety Division, the Building Official shall issue a Certificate of Occupancy that contains the following:

1. The building permit number.
2. The address of the structure.
3. The name and address of the owner.
4. A description of that portion of the structure for which the certificate is issued.
5. A statement that the described portion of the structure has been inspected for compliance with the requirements of this code for the occupancy and division of occupancy and the use for which the proposed occupancy is classified.
6. The name of the Building Official.
7. The edition of the code under which the permit was issued.
8. The use and occupancy, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 3.
9. The type of construction as defined in Chapter 6.
10. The design occupant load.
11. If an automatic sprinkler system is provided, whether the sprinkler system is required.
12. Any special stipulations and conditions of the building permit.