



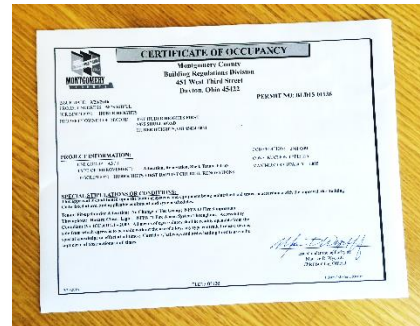
OBTAINING CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS

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PROJECT SUCCESS CHECKLIST

In Ohio the owner of an existing building may request the issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy. The Building Official shall issue a Certificate of Occupancy, **provided there are not violations of law or orders of the Building Official pending, and it is established after inspection and investigation that the alleged occupancy of the building or structure has heretofore existed. Please be aware that an existing building with proposed change of occupancy, alterations, or addition, is not qualified for this application.**

Certificates of Occupancy validate the approved use of a building



To ensure timely approval and inspection, this guide explains what needs to be submitted, and what needs to be inspected, by whom, and in what sequence.

WHO'S INVOLVED

You will need approvals from some or all of the following:

- **Zoning Department** – Verifies the proposed use is a permitted use, even if it is a continuation of a previously approved use. They may need updated contact information.
- **The Building Department** – Issues permits and inspects the building or space for conformance with the plans and checks the life safety features.
- **The Fire Department** – Consults with the Building Department in the course of their inspection and investigation to determine that the historic occupancy is consistent with the request and that there are no unsafe conditions or outstanding violations of law.
- **Health Department** – Needs to approve the re-establishment of any food service operation or inspect any plumbing, sewer, or septic alterations.

WHAT'S COVERED, AND WHAT'S EXEMPT

Example of what's included:

The Certificate of Use and Occupancy can be requested for existing buildings, and for existing spaces within a building. **This can also be used for "change of use" where Building Official deems the hazard has not increased and no building changes are taking effect.**

The current or proposed use of the existing building or space must be consistent with historic use of the structure.

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Examples of exclusions:

- This process is **not** for “change of uses” where hazard may be increased. For example, if a structure was originally built as a school (E-education) use building then unlawfully modified to an “R”-residential use, a request to issue a new “R” use occupancy certificate cannot be honored. A building permit will be required for such changes. **This may require sealed drawings from an architect or engineer.**
- If the new use is that same as the previously approved use, but any alterations are being made, then the entire permit needs to be submitted as a building permit. **(Possible sealed drawings).**
- Even re-occupying an existing restaurant requires new approval if appliance layout has changed, or rooms are used in a different manner or layout than what was previously approved.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

- Completed application form and fee.
- Physical attributes of the structure:
 - Floor plan of each floor in the building
 - Door sizes and hardware types (panic hardware, door swing, thumb latches, etc.)
 - Construction type; i.e. wood frame, masonry, etc.
 - Any fire escapes, outside stairs, etc.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION THAT WILL BE HELPFUL

- Local Auditors real estate information
- Photographs of exterior and interior, labeled
- Construction date of the structure
- Existing construction documents, where available.
- Evidence of historic use(s)

WHAT NEEDS TO BE INSPECTED, AND BY WHOM

Copy of the Building Department permit and approved plans must be on jobsite for inspection

Z = Zoning B = Building Inspection F = Fire Inspection H = Health Department

- Condition of site features – Z
- Posted address on the structure – F, B
- Authorized access must be provided to all areas of the structure, including basements and utility areas - B, F, H
- Checking for unsafe, unauthorized or unsanitary conditions – B, F, H
- Exit signs and emergency lights – B, F
- Door hardware- B, F
- Sprinkler & fire alarm systems - F
- Fire extinguishers - F