

Boston Fire Department

Fire Prevention Division
1010 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, Ma. 02118
617-343-2188
617-343-2133 fax

Certificate of Occupancy Guidelines

The Boston Fire Department plays an important role in obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy for new residential units and businesses. The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) will not issue a Certificate of Occupancy without input from the Boston Fire Department. An owner or developer must provide information related to the safety and fire protection of a business before it can be occupied by the public, or in the case of residential units, closed upon.

Process

1. An owner or developer initiates the Certificate of Occupancy process by applying at ISD. This request is faxed to the Fire Department's certificate of Occupancy office located on the fourth floor of 1010 Massachusetts Avenue.
2. After the receipt of this faxed request, an inspector is assigned to work with the owner or developer to collect the information we need to confirm the property is ready for public access.
3. The property representative should note that many of the criteria listed below involve review and testing by the Boston Fire Department. This can delay turning over a property when sufficient time has not been set aside for the Certificate of Occupancy process.
4. When all the information below *which applies to the property* has been collected and is satisfactory, all testing is completed and a final walk-through is conducted, the Fire Department signs off the request and the Certificate of Occupancy may be picked up at ISD.

Criteria

- Copy of ISD sprinkler permit
- Copy of BFD sprinkler permit
- Contractor's Material and Test Certificate for Aboveground Piping.
- Contractor's Material and Test Certificate for Underground Piping.

- Contractor's Material and Test Certificate for Aboveground and Underground Piping for Standpipe Systems.

(The above are usually supplied by the Sprinkler Contractor when work has been done involving sprinkler or standpipe systems.)

- Fire pump acceptance test data sheet and curve.

(Provided by the fire pump contractor where a pump is installed. New installations must have a test witnessed by the BFD)

- Generator acceptance test.

(New installations must be inspected by the BFD)

- Fire Alarm Record of Completion

(Furnished by the fire alarm contractor or monitoring company)

- Flammability Certificates for interior finish

(Where carpet, upholstered furniture, draperies and similar items are installed, manufacturer's certification must be submitted to the Department Chemist.

BFD Chemist's Office 617-343-3527
115 Southampton Street
Boston, Ma. 02118

- Smoke-control testing

(Engineer's data is submitted to and Testing is witnessed by the BFD)

- Registered Professional Engineer's Affidavit

(Affidavit with signed stamp from the PE responsible for the design of fire protection system per 780 CMR 903.1)

- Evacuation plan
- Place of Assembly Permit

(See below)

Assembly Permit Review

Place of Assembly Permits are issued by the Boston Fire Department for businesses and occupancies which gather together more than 50 persons for reasons such as civic, social or religious purposes. (examples include theaters, restaurants and exhibition halls.)

For the BFD review, two sets of floor plans should be first submitted to ISD (building department), where an occupancy number, or "load" based upon exit features and other details will be stamped by their reviewer. These drawings must include:

- Architect's signed stamp.
- Dimensions or scale noted.
- Location of all furnishings such as tables, chairs, booths, stools and bars or counters.
- Room or area use and occupant load shown, as calculated by the architect based on their interpretation of 780 CMR 1008.0

The Boston Fire Department will then review the architect's occupant load, and either concur or assign a number based upon the actual layout of the interior spaces. This number cannot exceed that assigned by ISD, and in fact, the occupant load which is assigned will be the lower of the two. Both drawings will be stamped by the Fire Department reviewer, with one set held for inspection purposes.

Evacuation Plan

An Evacuation Plan is required for many occupancies such as hospitals, schools, day cares, high-rise buildings and others. All "Places of Assembly" require an evacuation plan as well.

Evacuation plans instruct the staff on how to react during an emergency to protect the safety of their guests. An evacuation plan can be very simple for a small restaurant or lecture hall, or more complex, as is required for a large nightclub. While each plan is as different as the building it covers, good evacuation plans have some things in common:

- The staff is given specific jobs, itemized by title, not name.
- Evacuation routes are spelled out, with occupants taking advantage of the closest exit.
- Someone should check restrooms, or other remote areas open to the public.
- Someone should be ready to assist the fire department with Information.
- Someone should call 911.