

Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) Checklist and Process



The purpose of the Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is to ensure that the use of building, structure, or land in the District of Columbia conforms to the Zoning Regulations, DCMR Title 11, and to the provisions of the DC Building Code, DCMR Title 12A. In most cases, no person can use a building, structure or land in the District of Columbia for any purpose other than a single family dwelling until a valid C of O has been issued.

To apply for a C of O, please complete the C of O application form located at <http://dcra.dc.gov/DC/DCRA/Permits/Certificate+of+Occupancy+Application+and+Instructions> and follow the directions listed below. If you propose to operate an eating establishment, please submit the [Eating Establishment Questionnaire](#) with your Certificate of Occupancy application.

Applications must be submitted in person at DCRA's Permit Center which is located at 1100 4th Street SW, Second Floor.
DCRA does not accept applications and payments that are mailed. Such submittals will be returned.

For applications other than ownership change, please allow 10 business days for the review of your application.

Ownership Change:

1. Submit fully completed application form (items #1-20) with the following supporting documents:

- Copy of the current C of O for the building or lease space
- C of O Authorization Form (required if you are starting a business in a building or on a property that already has a C of O)
- Copy of the deed
- Copy of signed lease (in cases where a lease has not been executed, the Zoning Administrator may accept a signed letter from the property owner authorizing the applicant to secure a C of O to facilitate the transfer of the business).

2. Bring completed application, the above supporting documents and application filing fee to DCRA's Permit Center, 1100 4th Street SW, Second Floor to submit the application.

3. Application will be routed to Zoning (through a Plan Review Coordinator) for review.

4. In most instances, a zoning inspection is required for nonconforming uses apartment or rental units in the R-2, R-3, R-4, and R-5A zoning districts, and for eating establishments. Call (202) 442-9557 and use code #745 to schedule a zoning inspection. It normally takes 24-48 hours before the inspection results are entered into the Department's computer system.

5. Once Zoning inspection has been successfully completed, and resulted in DCRA's computer system, the C of O certificate will be ready for issuance.

6. Pay issuance fee and obtain C of O certificate.

New Construction, Change of Use, Load Change:

If a new building or addition is constructed or there is a change of use or a building load change, a building permit application with plans is required to be approved, constructed and inspected prior to the approval of a C of O. For more

information regarding the building permit process and material to submit, please visit <http://dcra.dc.gov/DC/DCRA/Permits>.

Following completion of the construction, and submittal of the [pre-occupancy data sheet](#)* call (202) 442-9557 and use code #745 to request a zoning inspection. It normally takes 24-48 hours before the inspection results are entered into the Department's computer system. You may then complete and submit the [Certificate of Occupancy Application](#)*.

C of O applications for New Construction and Load Change (over 5,000 square feet) will be reviewed by District Department of the Environment (DDOE) Stormwater Management. Failure to request a Final Inspection of storm water management facilities and submittal of as-built plans of the completed storm water facility may result in denial of the C of O Permit.

Please follow the following steps:

1. Submit fully completed application form (items #1-20) with the following supporting documents:

- Copy of existing C of O Permit (except new buildings applying for the first time)
- Copy of issued Building Permit
- C of O Authorization Form (required if you are starting a business in a building or on a property that already has a C of O)
- Completed Inspection Record

2. Bring completed application, supporting documents and application filing fee to DCRA's Permit Center, 1100 4th Street SW, Second Floor to file the application.

3. Application will be routed to Zoning and other disciplines as required for review.

4. Once Zoning and other disciplines review and approve, and the inspections have been successfully completed and resulted in DCRA's computer system, the C of O certificate will be ready for issuance.

5. Pay issuance fee and obtain C of O certificate.

1100 4th Street SW, Washington DC 20024 Phone: (202) 442-4400

<http://dcra.dc.gov/>



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