



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
BUILDING & SAFETY DIVISION**

2729 Prospect Park Drive | Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

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## **Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) Information**

### **Background:**

Many building owners, real estate professionals, tenants and business owners are surprised that there is a requirement for a commercial space to have a Certificate of Occupancy (sometimes referred to as a "C of O", or "COO"). This is a document that verifies that the location, building construction type, certain building features and the type of occupancy (business, assembly, mercantile, storage, etc.) are safe and approved for use.

### **Legal Requirement:**

The California Building Code and the Rancho Cordova Municipal Code requires a C of O for use of all building types. The Rancho Cordova Municipal Code amends the California Building Code section (CBC 111) as follows:

*"RCMC 16.02.050(J) - 111.1 Change of Occupancy.* No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and change of occupancy of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made, until the Building Official has issued a certificate of occupancy therefor as provided herein. Issuance of a certificate of occupancy shall not be construed as an approval of a violation of the provisions of this code or other ordinances of the City of Rancho Cordova.

Exceptions:

1. Certificates of Occupancy are not required for R-3 One or Two-Family Dwellings or Townhome occupancies.
2. Certificates of occupancy are not required for work exempt from permits under Section R105.2.
3. Accessory buildings or structures (Residential Only)."

The occupancy classification of a building is defined in Chapter 3 of the California Building Code. In general, these are:

Assembly (A) – Section 303	Business (B) – Section 304	Educational (E) – Section 305
Factory (F) – Section 306	Hazardous (H) – Section 307	Institutional (I) – Section 308
Mercantile (M) – Section 309	Residential (R) – Section 310	Storage (S) – Section 311
Utility (U) – Section 312	Laboratories (L) – Section 313	Organized Camps (C) – Section 314

Several occupancy groups have specific sub classifications as well. Each has its own specific safety requirements in the code that apply to issues such as the type of structure, how close it may be to property lines and other tenants and whether specific fire assemblies are required to separate it from other uses. Zoning and specific plan requirements also are reviewed prior to issuing a C of O.

### **Certificate of Occupancy FAQ:**

#### **What is a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O)?**

A C of O is a legal document issued by the building official that states specific information: building permit number, address, name of building owner, a description of the portion of the building, the name of the building official, the edition of the code for which the approval is granted, the approved use and occupancy, the type of building construction, the design occupant load, whether an automatic sprinkler system is required and provided, and any special conditions. Furthermore, the C of O also includes a statement that

the space has been inspected for compliance with the code for that specific occupancy classification by the city.

**Why is a C of O Important?**

The C of O gives assurance to building owners, tenants, employees, insurance companies and visitors that that the building meets the safety requirements of the code and is legally occupied.

**How do I know if a C of O has been issued for my space?**

It is required that the C of O to be posted “in a conspicuous place” within the building. If you do not see a C of O posted, you can contact our Permit Services staff at the information located at the bottom of this page. You will need to provide the exact address (with suite or space number) and a description of the space which includes the use and an estimate of the area (how many square feet). City staff can search our records and see if one has been issued for the building or business, or a similar business that previously occupied the space.

**How do I get a copy of a previously issued C of O? How do I get a previously issued C of O updated for my business?**

To receive a copy of a C of O, you will need to submit a Public Records Request through the City Clerk’s Office. There is a form to fill out to provide us with the address for the document you are requesting.

If there has been a change in the occupancy, a new permit and C for O is required for the new tenant. Depending on type of new tenant or business (compared to the previous one), a new C of O may require a simple submittal (see the answer to the next question below), or a more complicated, full plan review and inspection process. Contact our Permit Services staff for more information.

**I do not have a C of O and your records show that one has not been previously issued for my space. How do I get one?**

We will need to issue a simple permit and perform an inspection. If no work is being done, and there has been no change in use from the previous tenant, a “Non-construction Certificate of Occupancy” permit may be an option. Information can be obtained on our website, or by contacting our staff.

**If I received a building permit when I built or improved my tenant space, do I get a C of O?**

Yes, after completion of all final inspections, the C of O is automatically mailed out to the permit address.

Please contact the Building & Safety Division if you have any questions about Certificates of Occupancy, permits, or building construction safety in general. We can be reached at:

**Rancho Cordova Building & Safety Division**  
**2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670**  
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