



Occupant/Tenant Change-Out Bulletin

You are moving into a vacant tenant space with a new business similar to the previous tenant and will not be performing any construction work; do you need a “building permit”?

There are still life safety requirements that must be approved before you can open. These life safety items are verified through a permit and inspection program administered through the **Development Service Center**, located at **161 South Charlotte Street. (828-259-5846)** The City of Asheville has streamlined this process to obtain your Certificate of Occupancy by working with one inspector and one form for you to complete. Therefore, you must fill out an application giving us information on the new business, certify you are performing no construction work, pay a nominal inspection fee, and site verify that all the required life safety items are in place before you open for business.

To complete process, the new tenant use must be inspected, so we can validate that a “Change of Occupancy” is not being created. A Deputy Fire Marshal from the Asheville Fire Department will make an inspection. Before you call for that inspection, you must be ready. The items listed below are the most common items the Deputy Fire Marshal will be looking for. Note that most items are maintenance or space set-up issues.

Address: Every building and/or business suite is required to post approved address numbers that are visible from the street and alley. Address numbers shall be a minimum of six (6) inches in height and contrast with their background. Suite or room numbers shall be a minimum of (4) inches in height and contrast with their background.

Tenant Identification: Space with a secondary exit to the exterior or exit corridor shall be provided with tenant identification by business name and/or address. Six inch letters and numbers shall be posted on the exterior side or exit corridor of the door, be plainly legible and shall contrast with their background.

Merchandise and Storage: Fixtures and displays of goods for sale to the public shall be arranged so as to maintain free, immediate and unobstructed access to exits. Furnishings or other objects shall not be placed to obstruct exits, access to exits, or visibility of and to the exits. Storage, shelving, and displays cannot exceed 6 feet in height shall be anchored and braced against overturning.

Aisle Clearance: The minimum clear aisle width shall not be less than 36 inches.

Exiting: Dead End: Fixtures and displays shall be arranged so as not to create a dead end corridor more than 20 feet in length. The maximum travel distance for a single exit without exceptions is 75 feet. And the maximum occupant load is 49 persons.

Exit Door Locks: Exit doors shall be operable from the inside without the use of a key, special effort or knowledge. Keyed deadbolt locks are allowed by exception only.

Exit signs and Emergency Lighting: All must be functional when inspected.

Fire Extinguishers: Provide Multipurpose Dry Chemical type fire extinguishers with a minimum rating of 2A - 10B:C. Extinguishers shall be located on every floor or level. Maximum travel distance from any point in space or building cannot exceed 75 feet. Extinguishers shall be mounted on wall or installed in a listed cabinet no higher than 4 ft. above floor, plainly visible and readily accessible or signage shall be provided. Extinguishers shall not project more than 4 inches over any walking surface when mounted between 27 inches and 48 inches above the floor surface. They must bear a current inspection tag as well from a fire extinguisher company.

Fire Protection Systems: If present, a copy of a current test certificate for the fire alarm system and/or sprinkler system must be provided. The certificate cannot be more than twelve months old to be valid and with any noted deficiencies corrected.

Knox Box: A “Knox” key storage box shall be provided for if your building is equipped with an alarm system. A minimum of 3 complete sets of keys shall be provided. Keys shall be provided for all exterior entry doors, fire protection equipment control equipment rooms, mechanical and electrical rooms, elevator controls and equipment spaces, etc. Our fire department has been converted to Blanket Order Authorization status. You can now purchase Knox-Boxes via www.knoxbox.com, with instant e-mail notifications. Knox Company 1-800-552-5669

Correction Orders: This document is a guide and cannot be all inclusive. There may be other technical issues that are identified during the inspection process. Issuance of a permit under this program shall not prevent the City of Asheville from thereafter requiring correction of any violations of the Codes. Questions can be directed to 828-259-5441.

To schedule your inspection, call 828-259-5441 the day before the date you desire an inspection.

If you find after you move in there are construction needs, you must reapply at the Development Service Center and disclose the proposed work, before doing any work. Working without a permit will result in fines and could delay the opening of your business.

Finally, keep in mind that it would be in your best interest prior to purchasing or leasing any existing building to check with The City of Asheville Development Service Center about the business you are planning and your intended location for any code or zoning issues.