

Certificate of Occupancy Process for New Buildings

The certificate of occupancy (CO) is the final construction document issued by the building official to authorize occupancy of a structure upon completion of all building issues. Section 111.1 of the 2009 International Building Code (IBC) states that:

"No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and no change in the existing occupancy classification of a building or structure of portion thereof shall be made until the building official has issued a certificate of occupancy therefore 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 of other ordinances or the jurisdiction."

The certificate of occupancy follows the final approval of all issued trade and building permits, the completion of required site plan items and conditions, and the completion of the special use permit (SUP) requirements agreed to at the beginning of the construction process. The purpose of this handout is to explain the CO process for the City of Rockwall, the responsibility of the applicant, and the responsibility of each City department in recommending approval of the CO to the building official.

In Rockwall, the CO process begins and ends with the Building Inspections Department. It is recommended that the CO be applied for at the same time that the initial construction permits and plans are submitted for review. This usually speeds up the CO process as the project nears completion and settlement or move-in dates are being decided.

While the Building Inspections Department administers the CO process, inspections must be coordinated with, and approvals obtained from the following departments:

1. Building Inspections Department	972-771-7760
2. Engineering Department	972-771-7746
3. Fire Marshal's Office	972-771-7770
4. Health Department	214-202-1202
5. Planning and Zoning Department	972-771-7745

Separate inspections are conducted by each department to ensure that the items under their jurisdiction have been completed by the applicant. For projects that involve food (restaurants, hotel or school kitchens, etc.); child or adult care (day care centers, retirement homes, schools, etc.); public or private swimming pools; and other types of business' that involve food or health related matters, approval by the Health Department is also required before a CO may be issued.

It is required that a minimum period of two weeks be allowed between the completion of construction and the intended "move-in" date, or grand opening event requiring an issued CO. This two-week period will allow for any noted deficiencies to be corrected in time for the scheduled opening without delaying the CO. It is important to have one site person designated to coordinate the inspection process, communicate with the appropriate departments to resolve any inspection disapprovals, and then follow up with the Building Inspections Department to obtain the issued CO. **After CO is approved by all departments, a fee of \$75 will be charged.** For disapproved inspections, the specific departments should be contacted to reschedule the inspection once the issue is resolved. Planning and coordination by site personnel is essential, as it is usually not possible to obtain the CO on the same day that the inspections are conducted.

Violation notices will be issued if a structure is occupied or used before a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Any person who violates or fails to comply with these requirements shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be liable to a fine of not more than two thousand dollars (\$2000.00). Each day such violation shall be permitted to exist shall be guilty of a separate offense and upon conviction thereof shall be fined as herein provided.