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What is this and what does it mean?

In the North Carolina Building Code, businesses are designated with an *Occupancy Classification*. When a building is newly built, it is designed and built to the businesses classification, however if a new business moves into an existing building, then the North Carolina Existing Building Code (**NCEBC**) requires a review of the building and what it's last business classification is to the new business classification.

Chapter 10 of the **NCEBC** outlines requirements of a Change of Occupancy Classification and Change of Use. A review is required even if there is no construction.

What the **NCEBC** requires for these are in respect to life-safety items that may change depending on the business' *Occupancy Classification* and the level of risk assigned to each. This means that depending on what the last classification is compared to the new classification, that the building owner or tenant may have to do construction, even if none was planned, to meet the new life-safety requirements.

This document will provide information and guidance so that a stakeholder will have basic knowledge on North Carolina Building Code requirements and other possible regulatory entity information.



What are the Occupancy Classifications?

The North Carolina Building Code (Chapter 3) outlines the ten different types of Occupancy classifications and their sub-groups that businesses are categorized as. **These categories are different from zoning classification.**

1. **Assembly**: The use of a building or structure for the gathering of persons for the purposes such as civic, social, or religious functions; recreation, food, or drink consumption, or awaiting transportation.
 - a) **Group A1**: includes with fixed seating, intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts or motion pictures.
 - ❖ Examples: Motion picture theaters, concert halls, television and radio studios with an audience, theaters, etc.
 - b) **Group A2**: the use for food and/or drink consumption.
 - ❖ Examples: Banquet halls, casinos, nightclubs, restaurants, cafeterias, taverns, etc.
 - c) **Group A3**: used for worship, recreation, amusement, and other assembly areas not classified elsewhere in Group A.
 - ❖ Examples: Amusement arcades, art galleries, bowling alleys, community halls, courtrooms, dance halls, funeral parlors, gyms, lecture halls, places of religious worship, libraries, pool and billiard parlors, etc.
 - d) **Group A4**: used for viewing indoor sporting events and activities with spectator seating.
 - ❖ Examples: Arenas, skating rinks, swimming pools, tennis courts, etc.
 - e) **Group A5**: used for participation in or viewing outdoor activities.
 - ❖ Examples: Amusement parks, bleachers, grandstands, stadiums, etc.
2. **Business**: The use of a building or structure for office, professional services, service type transactions including storage of records and accounts.
 - ❖ Examples: Airport traffic control towers, ambulatory care facilities, animal hospitals, banks, barber and beauty shops, car wash, dry cleaning and laundries, educational facilities for students above the 12th grade, motor vehicle showrooms, professional services, etc.
3. **Educational**: The use of a building or structure by six or more persons at any one time for educational purposes through the 12th grade.
 - ❖ Examples: Schools, accessory rooms of religious worship (more than 100 people), drop-in and short term child care, day care (more than 5 children older than 2 ½ years of age)
4. **Factory**: The use of a building or structure for assembling, disassembling, fabricating, finishing, manufacturing, packing, repair, or processing operations that are not classified as **Hazard** or **Storage**.
 - a) **Group F1** (moderate hazard): used for uses not classified as *Group F2*.



- ❖ Examples: Aircraft manufacturing, automobiles and other motor vehicle, bakeries, breweries (over 16% alcohol), clothing, agricultural and construction machinery, dry cleaning and dyeing, electric generation plants, engine manufacturing and repair, food processing and commercial kitchens not associated with restaurants and similar establishments, laundries, motion picture and television filming (no audience), woodworking, etc.
 - b) **Group F2** (low hazard): used for fabrication or manufacturing of non-combustible materials that during finishing, packing, or processing do not involve a significant fire hazard.
 - ❖ Examples: Beverages (less than 16% alcohol), brick and masonry, ceramic products, foundries, ice, metal products, etc.
5. **Hazard:** The use of a building or structure that involves manufacturing, processing, generation, or storage of materials that constitute a physical or health hazard.
- a) **Group H1:** used for buildings or structures containing materials that pose a detonation hazard.
 - b) **Group H2:** used for buildings or structures containing materials that pose a deflagration hazard or hazard from accelerated burning.
 - c) **Group H3:** used for buildings or structures containing materials that support combustion or pose a physical hazard.
 - d) **Group H4:** used for buildings or structures containing materials that are health hazards
 - e) **Group H5:** used for buildings or structures used for semiconductor fabrication and comparable research and development areas in which hazardous production materials are used.
6. **Institutional:** The use of a building or structure in which care or supervision is provided to persons incapable of self-preservation.
- a) **Group I1:** the use of a building for more than 16 persons (excluding staff) who reside on a 24-hour basis in a supervised environment and receive custodial care.
 - ❖ Examples: Alcohol and drug centers, assisted living and congregate care facilities, group homes, etc.
 - b) **Group I2:** used for medical care for more than five persons who are incapable of self-preservation.
 - ❖ Examples: Foster care facilities, detoxification facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
 - c) **Group I3:** used for more than five persons who are under restraint or security.
 - ❖ Examples: Correction centers, detention centers, jails, prisons, etc.
 - d) **Group I4:** used for custodial care of more than five persons of any age less than 24 hours per day.
 - ❖ Example: Adult day care, child day care, etc.
7. **Mercantile:** The use of a building or structure for the display and sales of merchandise.
- ❖ Examples: Department stores, drug stores, markets, motor fuel dispensing facilities, retail or wholesale stores, etc.

8. **Residential**: The use of a building or structure for sleeping purposes when not classified as **Institutional** or regulated by the *North Carolina Residential Code* (detached single-family home, duplex, or townhome).
- a) **Group R1**: buildings containing sleeping units where the occupants are transient.
 - ❖ Examples: Boarding homes (transient) with more the 10 occupants, hotels, motels, etc.
 - b) **Group R2**: buildings with more than two dwelling units or sleeping units, where the occupants are primarily permanent in nature.
 - ❖ Example: apartments, boarding houses (more than 16 occupants), convents, dormitories, extended stay hotels, live/ work units, vacation time share properties, etc.
 - c) **Group R3**: buildings where occupants are primarily permanent in nature and is not classified as **Group R1, R2, R4, or Institutional**.
 - ❖ Examples: Buildings with no more than two dwelling units, Boarding houses (16 or less occupants), child day care (8 or less persons with no more than five for a preschool for less than 24 hours), etc.
 - For the purposes of this, a residential house would be classified as **Group R3** when a business wants to occupy the building.
 - d) **Group R4**: buildings where custodial care is given to more than five but not more than 16 occupants (excluding staff), who reside on a 24 hour basis.
 - ❖ Example: Alcohol and drug centers, assisted living facilities, group homes, adult day care and child day care (less than 24 hours), social rehabilitation facilities, etc.
9. **Storage**: Buildings or structures for storage that is not classified as **Hazardous**.
- a) **Group S1** (moderate hazard): used for storage that is not classified as **Group S2**.
 - ❖ Examples: Aircraft hangar, bags (paper, cloth, burlap), books, clothing, furniture, lumber, bulk storage of tires, etc.
 - b) **Group S2** (low hazard): used for the storage of noncombustible materials on wooded pallets or in paper cartons.
 - ❖ Examples: Beverages (16% alcohol or less), cement in bags, dry cell batteries, electrical motors, food products, meats, metal furniture, appliances, parking garages, etc.
10. **Utility**: Buildings or structures of an accessory character and miscellaneous structures not classified in any other **Occupancy Classification**.
- ❖ Examples: agricultural buildings, carports, greenhouses, private garages, retaining walls, sheds, towers, etc.

What Am I Supposed To Do?

Now that the ten different Occupancy Classifications have been defined, you can determine the classification of your business. We can assist you if needed.

You will also need to know the classification of the previous business. You may contact the City of Fayetteville's Fire Marshal's Office (910-433-1730) or the City of Fayetteville's Development Liaison (910-433-1464) to find this information.

If the previous business is a different Occupancy Classification or a change withinin *Groups*, then a **Change of Occupancy Classification** review is required. If the businesses are of the same Occupancy Classification but the primary function is different, then a **Change of Use** review is required.

Now if it is determined that either of these reviews are needed, the next step will be to contact the City of Fayetteville's Zoning Division (910-433- 1062/1767) to find out if this area is zoned for the business function. If not, then the Zoning Administrators can guide you through what available options you have and which you may want to choose.

Chapter 10 of the North Carolina Existing Building Code regulates what is required for the review, but this document will give the required documents needed to submit to the City of Fayetteville for the review.

Helpful and informative web links:

- City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections Division:
<https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections>
- City of Fayetteville's Fire Marshal's Office:
<https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/fire/about-us/fire-prevention/code-enforcement>
- City of Fayetteville's Planning and Zoning Division:
<https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/planning-zoning>

Requirements for a Change of Occupancy Classification Review

The following is a list of documents that will have to be submitted through the City of Fayetteville's E-Development portal for the review. The portal can be found at this web address:

<https://fayetteville.idtplans.com/secure> .

The City of Fayetteville highly recommends that you hire a design professional to make the procedure as quick as possible as the information is very specific.

You can find more information on how to use the portal on the City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections webpage at: <https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections/idt-plans-and-fayworx-help> .

1. **An Appendix B**

An Appendix B is a document that provides building information and a code summary for the purposes of evaluating the building. You may find a copy of one at either the City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections webpage at: <https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections/administration-permitting/permits> or at the North Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshal's webpage at: <https://www.ncosfm.gov/codes> (you can also view State Building Codes at this site for free)

2. **An Occupant Load Calculation**

An occupant load calculation is a floor layout of the building and how many occupants can be in the space as determined by Chapter 10 of the North Carolina Building Code. Be aware that if the occupant load is higher than the bathroom requirements, then a new bathroom or water closets will have to be installed; which will void the no construction review and require construction reviews.

3. **An Outdoor Air Ventilation Calculation**

All indoor habitable commercial spaces generally require a certain amount of outside air to keep the air fresh within a building. A calculation of the space use and the formula found in Chapter 4 of the North Carolina Mechanical Code will determine how much outside air is required.

4. **A "To Scale" Drawing Of The Floor Layout And Life-Safety Plan**

A scaled drawing and life-safety plan is a drawing of the floor layout to scale. This drawing will also show the bathrooms and fixtures within, all exit doors, indicate where fire extinguishers are located, location of sprinkler heads (if applicable), location of fire alarm panels, smoke and/or carbon monoxide alarms (if applicable).

Also shown will be the travel distance from the furthest point away from an exit door and how many feet of travel by footpath to the exit door.



After the review is complete and approved, you will have to submit a building permit for a change of occupancy. You can find a copy of the permit application and more information at the City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections webpage at: <https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections> . Once approved, a new **Certificate of Compliance** will be issued and you may open your business.

Requirements For A Change of Use Review

The following is a list of documents that will have to be submitted through the City of Fayetteville's E-Development portal for the review. The portal can be found at this web address: <https://fayetteville.idtplans.com/secure> .

You can find more information on how to use the portal on the City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections webpage at: <https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections/idt-plans-and-fayworx-help> .

1. **A "To Scale" Drawing Of The Floor Layout And Life-Safety Plan**

A scaled drawing and life-safety plan is a drawing of the floor layout to scale. This drawing will also show the bathrooms and fixtures within, all exit doors, indicate where fire extinguishers are located, location of sprinkler heads (if applicable), location of fire alarm panels, smoke and/or carbon monoxide alarms (if applicable).

Also shown will be the travel distance from the furthest point away from an exit door and how many feet of travel by footpath to the exit door.

After the review is complete and approved, you will have to submit a Change of Use/Change of Occupant (tenant) form. You can find a copy of the permit application and more information at the City of Fayetteville's Permitting and Inspections webpage at: <https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/city-services/development-services/permitting-inspections> . Once approved, a new **Certificate of Compliance** will be issued and you may open your business.

The City of Fayetteville welcomes everyone to open their business here but the safety and well-being of our citizens and guests is our first commitment.



Additional Web Links:

- North Carolina Department of Insurance/ Office of the State Fire Marshal:
<https://www.ncosfm.gov/>
- North Carolina Department of Transportation:
<https://www.ncdot.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- North Carolina Department of Human and Health Services:
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/>
- Cumberland County
<https://www.cumberlandcountync.gov/>
- City of Fayetteville:
<https://www.fayettevillenc.gov/>
- Public Works Commission:
<https://www.faypwc.com/>
- Lumbee River EMC:
<https://www.lumbeeriver.com/#>
- South River EMC:
<https://www.sremc.com/>
- Duke Energy:
<https://www.duke-energy.com/Home>
- Piedmont Natural Gas:
<https://www.piedmontng.com/home>

