

# Certificate of Occupancy Only Application Process Guide

A Certificate of Occupancy Only (COO) application is obtained when a building or tenant space is undergoing a change of use per the International Building Code or the Tulsa Zoning Code, but only when there is no proposed construction.

The COO is needed in order to confirm that the space in question provides all the life safety measures required for the new occupancy and that the new zoning use is allowed in that zoning district.

## **Obtaining a COO is a 4-step process:**

1. Application
2. Code Compliance Reviews
3. Inspections
4. Processing

### **1. Application**

To apply for a COO, bring a completed application to the Permit Center at City Hall and meet with the COO Coordinator. The application must include the following: **COO Application, Floor Plan, Site Plan, and Spacing Verification**. Only fully completed applications will be reviewed for code compliance.

#### **COO Application**

The COO application can be found online. All 4 pages of the document must be filled out and submitted including existing building information. The property owner(s) or a management company may have this information.

Applicants pay a non-refundable application fee that is applied to the final COO fees. Once paid, the application will move to review.

#### **Plans – Floor and Site Plan**

The Floor Plan and Site Plan must be legible and outline all the necessary information needed for the code compliance reviews. Please follow the instruction in the Plan Requirements. Include the Plan Requirement details on plans.

#### **Spacing Verification**

The spacing verification is not required for all proposed uses. The COT Zoning Code requires a minimum distance between some business uses. An example is the 1000' spacing requirement between medical marijuana dispensaries. If the proposed use is subject to a spacing requirement, the applicant must verify that the required spacing is met.

## 2. Code Compliance Reviews

Two reviews are completed for code compliance: **Architectural Review** and **Zoning Review**. At the end of these reviews, applications will either be approved and moved on to inspections or a Letter of Deficiency (LOD) will be issued.

### **Architectural Review**

The architectural review ensures the area to be occupied by the proposed use meets code requirements for the required application use group. Floor Plans are reviewed to ensure compliance per the International Building Code (IBC), the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), and Historical Data.

An Architectural LOD will request further information to determine code compliance or will redirect the initial application away from the COO application and require a building permit application. If further information is requested, the applicant will revise the plans per the LOD and resubmit in the Permit Center with the COO Coordinator for review.

### **Reasons for requiring a Building Permit:**

#### IBC and IEBC Review

If it is determined that the change of use requires upgrades for the space to meet code compliance, then changes will need to be made via a building permit.

#### Historical Data

The plans submitted will be compared to the most recent historical data on file with the City. If it is determined that unpermitted changes have been made to the space, the applicant will be required to apply for a building permit to get the unpermitted work permitted.

*Tip: Ask the property owner or management company if any unpermitted changes have been made in the space.*

### **Zoning Review**

The zoning review is reviewed per the Tulsa Zoning Code. This will evaluate if the proposed use is permitted as a “use by right” or by “Special Exception,” or if it is not permitted in the zoning district where the building is located.

If the proposed use is determined to be a use by right, the Zoning Review will be approved. If the proposed use is determined to be allowed per Special Exception, an LOD will be issued requiring that an application be made to the City of Tulsa Board of Adjustment (BOA) for a Special Exception to allow the proposed use. (The Tulsa Planning Office at INCOG should be contacted for instructions.) If the Special Exception is granted by the BOA, the applicant must submit a copy of the BOA meeting minutes to the Permit Center to continue the review of the application for COO. If the BOA denies the Special Exception or the proposed use is not permitted by the zoning of the property, a COO application will be denied.

Once the Architectural review and the Zoning reviews are approved, applicants will be contacted by the COO Coordinator to schedule COO Inspections.

### **3. Inspections**

The COO Inspections verify that the proposed space matches the plans submitted and it is safe to occupy. There will be five inspections scheduled: Building, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire. These can be scheduled as early as the next business day and will all be conducted on the same day. If the proposed space fails an inspection, the inspector will provide a list of items that need to be remedied before a reinspection is scheduled. Once these items are corrected, the applicant must contact the COO Coordinator to reschedule the failed inspections. Once the inspections are approved, the COO application will proceed to processing.

### **4. Processing**

During processing, the final fee will be assessed. The applicant will receive an email from the City of Tulsa permitting software with the invoice for the final fee. The fee ranges between \$450-\$500. This can be paid online or in person. After the applicant pays the fee and notifies the COO Coordinator that it has been paid, the COO will be reviewed and issued. This ensures that everything on the COO is correct before it is issued and can take 2-3 business days. Once it is processed, the applicant will be issued a COO and permitted to occupy the building.

If you are applying for a COO to receive either an OMMA Certificate of Compliance or an ABLE Commission Certificate of Compliance, you may move forward with these steps at this time. Please contact the COO Coordinator for further instructions on these two Certificates of Compliance.