City of Parksville

Occupant Load Calculations - Guideline

Occupant load calculations are used to determine the maximum permitted number of people that can safely occupy a space within a building. Calculations are done based on use of space and in many instances are required to support liquor license applications. The City of Parksville building inspections will perform the calculation in accordance with the current edition of the B.C. Building Code.

In order to accurately determine occupant load, please submit the following information:

1. Completed building permit application form.
2. Floor plan which includes the following information:
   a. Rooms and spaces clearly labelled as to their use;
   b. Table and seating plan;
   c. Permanent fixtures such as bars, partitions, fireplaces etc;
   d. Exit doors, washrooms;
   e. Room and space dimensions.
3. Current occupant load calculation if available.

The following items are used to determine the occupant load:

A. FLOOR AREA A basic calculation will involve dividing the floor area by the permitted area per person as determined by table 3.1.17.1 of the BCBC. Calculations will be done on each area based on use and some typical calculations can be:

- Dining, beverage and cafeteria space (restaurants) is 1.2 m^2 per person
- Space with non-fixed seating and tables (bar primary) is 0.95 m^2 per person
- Office space is 9.3 m^2 per person
- Mercantile (retail) is 3.7 m^2 per person
- Kitchens (commercial) is 9.3 m^2 per person

B. NUMBER OF WATER CLOSETS The total number of available toilets is also a determining factor in occupant load. Article 3.7.2.2 will determine how many washroom facilities are required based on the number of people. This can be a limiting factor for existing space because the area calculation may support more people than the washrooms can support. If you are looking to increase your occupant load, please be aware that you may require a building permit to install additional washroom facilities. There are also requirements for accessible washrooms for persons with disabilities.

Additional considerations to occupant load calculations include the requirement for a fire alarm system when the total number of persons exceeds 150, or the requirement for exit signs where the occupant load exceeds 60 persons and panic hardware on exit doors where the occupant load exceeds 100 persons.

Please note that a sign is required to be posted in a conspicuous place when the occupant load exceeds 60 persons or when the number of people does not exceed 30 in a group A2 (low occupant load D) occupancy.