

What is an Occupancy Permit?

Occupancy permits are documents that signify that a building official is satisfied and has approved your building as being suitable for occupation. The Building Bylaw requires the issuance of an occupancy permit prior to occupation of a new building.

An occupancy permit is not a statement that all the building work is necessarily complete. Nor is it a certificate that states that all building work complies with the relevant legislation or contract. An occupancy permit is issued when your building is “suitable to occupy” from a health and safety point of view.

An occupancy permit will only be issued to you when items affecting health and safety are in place and capable of being operational. These include things such as the water supply, sanitary and cooking facilities, smoke alarms, safety glass, carbon monoxide detectors, handrails and balustrades. It does not mean that all the painting is done or that the carpet is laid, for example.

When are occupancy permits required?

Building work for a new home (including units or apartments) will always require an occupancy permit to be issued. It is an offence to occupy a new home that does not have an occupancy permit.

A certificate of final inspection is issued for extensions or alterations to existing homes, which do not require an occupancy permit.

Why do I need an occupancy permit?

In addition to the responsibility of the relevant building inspector ensuring that a building permit is finalized, it is in the best interests of the owner and builder that building work has been satisfactorily completed and that an occupancy permit or certificate of final inspection has been issued. An owner should complete the building work and obtain the required permit or certificate for the following reasons but may not be limited to:

- An insurance policy may be rendered invalid if a building is occupied without a required certificate of final inspection or occupancy permit.
- When an owner wishes to sell a property, prospective purchasers will want to know that any building permit issued in relation to the property has been finalized by the issue of a certificate of final inspection or occupancy permit as required.
- Any warranty periods for the construction is triggered by the date of the occupancy permit or certificate of final inspection. This period may be extended beyond the time necessary through delaying the obtaining of the certificate of permit.
- A builder may need to supply his or her insurance provider evidence of satisfactory completion of previous contracted projects in order to commence further work

Homeowner Final Inspection Checklist - This is a sampling of some items that will be looked at, and is not necessarily inclusive of all requirements.

| ITEM | CHECKED |
|--|---------|
| EXTERIOR | |
| Grades around building – clearance from siding (8" minimum and positive slope away from foundation) | |
| Building Envelope – Cladding, roofing, flooring, windows, doors & assemblies are sealed and fire rated | |
| Building envelope to be weather protected | |
| Roof vents – size and location | |
| Roof drains – scupper drains on flat roofs | |
| Exterior stairs – guards, handrails, rise & run, attachment of stringers, no winders | |
| Deck coverage – railings, sway bracing of decks and carports | |
| Insulation around slabs on grade | |
| House numbers – visible from street | |

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| Soffits and carport ceilings – no gypsum board permitted | |
| Drip flashing over doors and windows | |
| Required firefighting access routes are provided and accessible | |
| INTERIOR | |
| Electrical, heating, plumbing, lighting, sewage systems are all complete, tested and operational | |
| Required exiting, floor access and egress systems are in place and operational | |
| Stairs – guards, railings, headroom | |
| Floor covering – kitchens, bathrooms | |
| Ventilation – fans, windows | |
| Doors between house and garage – weather stripping and closer | |
| Access to attic and crawl spaces | |
| Safety glass – sidelights, tub & shower enclosures, windows beside tub | |
| Size of doors to rooms – 2'-8" minimum to laundry | |
| Crawl spaces – ventilation, vapour barrier, heating, height, insulation | |
| Support of brick facings, etc. flashing at bottom | |
| Fireplaces – clearance from combustible material, hearth, etc. WETTBC certifications | |
| Smoke & Co alarms (All bedrooms, interconnected, max 15ft apart on same floor) | |
| GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION | |
| Development Permit conditions have been met (if applicable) | |
| Riparian approvals (if applicable) | |
| Development Variance Permit conditions / requirements | |
| Any maintenance agreements, Letters of credit etc. (if applicable) | |
| Natural Gas system final approval – BC Safety Authority | |
| Electrical system final approval – BC Safety Authority | |
| HVAC checklist | |
| Check any conditions attached to permit | |
| Accessory buildings | |
| Driveway access permit – Works and Utilities Department | |
| Sidewalk / access area clean | |
| Site – clear of any construction debris | |
| Survey certificate | |
| Sewage disposal system certifications | |
| Any & all Schedule C Letter of Assurances' from registered professionals on file. I.e.: Structural, Geotechnical, Fire Suppression, other | |
| The structure if the building with respect to the dwelling unit to be occupied is complete and ready to be used for its intended purpose. | |

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| Miscellaneous | |
| Water connection protected from contamination. Backflow protection. District staff will turn on the water at the curb once this has been demonstrated | |
| Sewer plug - to be removed by District staff | |