

Single or Shared Occupancies

The purpose of this brochure is to provide owners, business operators, tenants or occupants of buildings in Burnaby with information regarding Building, Electrical, Plumbing and Gas code requirements for single or shared occupancies.

"This information is provided for convenience only and is not in substitution of applicable City Bylaws or Provincial or Federal Codes or laws. You must satisfy yourself that any existing or proposed construction or other works complies with such Bylaws, Codes or other laws."

Other brochures related to this topic

- [Tenant improvement permits](#)
- [New businesses](#)

Background:

Building Code requirements

The BC Building Code defines a "suite" as a single room or series of rooms of complementary use, operated under a single tenancy. The term suite applies to both rental and ownership tenure.

The Code also defines "Occupancy" as meaning the use or intended use of a building or part thereof for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property.

The Code explains that a "means of egress means a continuous path of travel provided for the escape of persons from any point in a building or contained open space to a separate building, an open public thoroughfare, or an exterior open space protected from fire exposure from the building and having access to an open public thoroughfare. Means of egress includes exits and access to exits." (Division A – Part 1)

Each suite, except in the case of business & personal services occupancies, must be separated from adjoining suites by a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating of, in most cases, not less than 1 hour. A suite must have its own means of egress as determined by the requirements of the BC Building Code. That means of egress cannot include passage through other tenant space(s). These requirements apply to all floor areas of a building.

Electrical and plumbing requirements for a suite or single occupancy

Each suite must have its own electrical service with a panel and separate disconnect located within the suite. The required electrical permits must be obtained before any electrical work is done.

Suites must also have their own washroom, access to a public washroom or access to a washroom located in a common area of the building. Plumbing permits will be required for any plumbing work that needs to be done to meet these requirements.

For information concerning any subtrade permit contact 604-294-7130.

Shared occupancies:

In some special situations separately licenced business operators do function as a single occupant or tenant with open circulation and access throughout a mutually shared work area. For example, more than one business may sell merchandise from a common commercial location or several businesses may share an office space utilizing shared telephone systems, fax machines washrooms, reception area clerical staff, etc. **If the following conditions are met these shared occupancies may not require a fire separation between what would normally be considered separate tenants:**

- All businesses must be of similar type occupancies as described by Table 3.1.2.1 of the B.C. Building Code. (Copy attached).
- The floor area must have open circulation.
- Entrances and exits must be accessible to all of the tenants at all times.
- A statement of agreement (sample attached) must be provided by the tenants sharing the occupancy. This agreement must indicate that all facilities are shared and that all of the tenants operate as a single occupant without restriction to circulation and access throughout the building or suite. This agreement must be endorsed by the owner or owner's legal representative, and all tenants involved.
- A floor plan must be submitted to the Building Department for approval.
- This floor plan must indicate the use of all areas within the shared occupancy.

Electrical and plumbing requirements for shared occupancies

The electrical panel and disconnect must be located either in the shared occupancy, or in a common area of the building which is accessible to everyone. Electrical permits will be required for any electrical work that needs to be done to meet this requirement.

All shared occupancies must have access to a public washroom or access to a washroom located in a common area of the building. Plumbing permits will be required for any plumbing work that needs to be done to meet this requirement.

For information concerning any sub-trade permit contact 604-294-7130.

More information

If you intend to sublease a portion of a building, the “Shared Occupancy” criteria may apply to you. If your intention is to create a stand-alone separate tenancy within a building then you must obtain the appropriate approvals and permits prior to any construction or the installation of any plumbing or electrical fixtures. For more information applying for these permits please contact the Burnaby Building Department at 604-294-7130.

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(Attachments – Sample & BC Building Code Part 3)

SAMPLE

To: City of Burnaby
Building Department
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2

Date: _____

Dear Sir:

Subject: Multiple Occupancy at _____, Burnaby, BC
Address (Print)

Please be advised that all tenants involved at the subject premises agree that all facilities are shared and that all of the tenants operate as a single occupancy with circulation and access throughout the building or suite.

Furthermore, all tenants are of similar type occupancies as described in Table 3.1.2.1 of the 2006 British Columbia Building Code.

Owner or Owner's Legal Representative

Date

Tenant No. 1 (Tenant's Business Name)

Date

Tenant No. 2 (Tenant's Business Name)

Date

PART 3

Fire Protection, Occupant Safety and Accessibility

(See Appendix A)

Section 3.1 General

Table 3.1.2.1.

Major Occupancy Classification

Forming Part of Sentence 3.1.2.1.(1)

3.1.2 Classification of Buildings or Parts of Buildings by Major Occupancy

(See Appendix A.)

3.1.2.1. Classification of Buildings

- 1) Except as permitted by Articles 3.1.2.3. to 3.1.2.5., every *building* or part thereof shall be classified according to its *major occupancy* as belonging to one of the Groups or Divisions described in Table 3.1.2.1. (See Appendix A.)
- 2) A *building* intended for use by more than one *major occupancy* shall be classified according to all *major occupancies* for which it is used or intended to be used.

Group	Division	Description of <i>Major Occupancies</i>
A	1	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> intended for the production and viewing of the performing arts
A	2	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> not elsewhere classified in Group A
A	3	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> of the arena type
A	4	<i>Assembly occupancies</i> in which occupants are gathered in the open air
B	1	<i>Care or detention occupancies</i> in which persons are under restraint or are incapable of self preservation because of security measures not under their control
		<i>Care or detention occupancies</i> in which persons having cognitive or physical limitations require special care of treatment
		<i>Residential occupancies</i>

B	2	<i>Business and personal services occupancies</i>
		<i>Mercantile occupancies</i>
		<i>High hazard industrial occupancies</i>
C	-	<i>Medium hazard industrial occupancies</i>
		<i>Low hazard industrial occupancies</i>
D	-	
E	-	
F	1	
F	2	
F	3	

which multiple occupancy classification may present.

A-3.1.2.1(1) Major Occupancy Classification. The following are examples of the major occupancy classifications described in Table 3.1.2.1:

A-3.1.2 Use Classification. The purpose of classification is to determine which requirements apply. This Code requires classification in accordance with every major occupancy for which the building is used or intended to be used. Where necessary, an application clause has been inserted in this Part to explain how to choose between the alternative requirements

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Appendix A

Group A, Division 1

Motion picture theatres
Opera houses
Television studios admitting a viewing audience
Theatres, including experimental theatres

Group A, Division 2

Art galleries
Auditoria
Bowling alleys
Churches and similar places of worship
Clubs, non-residential
Community halls
Courtrooms
Dance halls
Exhibition halls (Other than classified in Group E)
Gymnasias
Lecture halls
Libraries
Licensed beverage establishments
Museums
Passenger stations and depots
Recreational piers

Restaurants
Schools and colleges, non-residential
Undertaking premises

Group A, Division 3

Arenas
Indoor swimming pools, with or without spectator seating
Rinks

Group A, Division 4

Amusement park structures (Not elsewhere classified)
Bleachers
Grandstands
Reviewing stands
Stadia

Group B, Division 1

Jails
Penitentiaries
Police stations with detention quarters
Prisons
Psychiatric hospitals with detention quarters
Reformatories with detention

quarters

Group B, Division 2

Children=s custodial homes
Convalescent homes
Hospitals
Infirmaries
Nursing homes
Orphanages
Psychiatric hospitals without detention quarters
Reformatories without detention quarters
Sanitoria without detention quarters

Group C

Apartments
Boarding houses
Clubs, residential
Colleges, residential
Convents
Dormitories
Hotels
Houses
Lodging houses
Monasteries
Motels

Schools, residential

Group D

Banks
Barber and hairdressing shops
Beauty parlours
Dental offices
Dry cleaning establishments,
self-service, not using
flammable or explosive
solvents or cleaners
Laundries, self-service
Medical offices
Offices
Police stations without
detention quarters
Radio stations
Small tool and appliance rental
and service establishments

Group E

Department stores
Exhibition halls
Markets
Shops
Stores
Supermarkets

Group F, Division 1

Bulk plants for flammable
liquids
Bulk storage warehouses for
hazardous substances
Cereal mills
Chemical manufacturing or
processing plants
Distilleries
Dry cleaning plants
Feed mills
Flour mills
Grain elevators
Lacquer factories
Mattress factories
Paint, varnish and pyroxylin
product factories
Rubber processing plants
Spray painting operations
Waste paper processing plants

Group F, Division 2

Aircraft hangars
Box factories
Candy plants
Cold storage plants
Dry cleaning establishments
not using flammable or
explosive solvents or
cleaners
Electrical substations
Factories
Freight depots
Helicopter landing areas on

roofs

Laboratories
Laundries, except self-service
Mattress factories
Planing mills
Printing plants
Repair garages
Salesrooms
Service stations
Storage rooms
Television studios not
admitting a viewing
audience
Warehouses
Wholesale rooms
Woodworking factories
Workshops

Group F, Division 3

Creameries
Factories
Laboratories
Power plants
Salesrooms
Sample display rooms
Storage garages, including
open air parking garages
Storage rooms
Warehouses
Workshops

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