

Certificate of Occupancy

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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This Information Bulletin describes the process of issuing a Certificate of Occupancy. Pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) [§129.0114 PDF](#), no structure or portion of a structure shall be used or occupied, and no change in the existing use or occupancy classification of a structure or portion of a structure shall be made until the Building Official has issued a Certificate of Occupancy approving that use or occupancy.

I. When is a Certificate of Occupancy Issued?

A Certificate of Occupancy is issued upon final approval of all inspections for work authorized under a building permit and associated permits. The permit holder may elect to have a copy of their Certificate of Occupancy delivered via mail or email.

- A. The City of San Diego issues Certificates of Occupancy for :
1. New non-residential buildings.
 2. New multiple dwelling unit (MDU) buildings.
 3. Tenant Improvements (TIs) to occupy a shell building
 4. Change of occupancy classification.
 5. Additions and alterations to an existing non-residential or MDU building, resulting in a change of occupancy classification.
- B. The City of San Diego does **not** issue a Certificate of Occupancy for:
1. Single-dwelling units, duplexes or townhomes.
 2. Private garages and sheds.
 3. Shell buildings.
 4. Tenant Improvements or remodels of existing structures when occupancy or occupant load does not change.
 5. Agricultural buildings.
 6. Change of ownership or tenancy.
 7. Other reasons such as satellite television usage or financial institution conditions.

II. Temporary Certificate of Occupancy

On a case-by-case basis, a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) may be issued for a limited period of time when the Building Official finds that a structure or a portion of a structure can be occupied safely, and no substantial hazard will result from occupancy of any structure or portion of a structure before all work is completed

How to Request a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy?

To request a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, submit a [“Request for Temporary Occupancy” \(Form DS-6004\)](#).

III. Certificate of Occupancy for a New Project

Once the Final Inspection is completed, a Certificate of Occupancy will be delivered to the permit holder. For affordable housing projects, the Certificate of Occupancy will be delivered within 5 business days and for emergency shelters, 2 business days. You may also email a request for a new Certificate of Occupancy to DSD at DSD-CofO-Request@sanidiego.gov.

IV. Requesting a Certificate of Occupancy for Existing Buildings

1. **How to Request a Copy**
To request a copy of a Certificate of Occupancy for an existing building, email DSDRCD@sanidiego.gov. Be sure to include the project address in your request so staff can locate the certificate. Please note that research fees may apply.
2. **If No Certificate is Found**
If a copy of the original Certificate of Occupancy is not available, complete a [Request for Certificate of Occupancy for an Existing Building, Form DS-6003](#). Research fees may be assessed. The request must include:
 - All supporting documentation.
 - A copy of the Inspection Record Card.
 - Permit/approval and project numbers.
 - Any other related information for City review.

Important! *The request will be processed within three weeks of receipt.*
3. **If No Final Inspection Approval Exists**
If there is no documentation confirming final inspection approval, you must submit an application for a [Building Permit](#) with plans prepared by a Licensed Architect or Engineer per the [Project Submittal Manual](#).

V. Suspension or Revocation of Certificate of Occupancy

Pursuant to SDMC [§129.0118 PDF](#), the Building Official may suspend or revoke a Certificate of Occupancy if the certificate was issued in error, or on the basis of incorrect information, or if the Building Official determines that the structure or portion of the structure is in violation of any ordinance, regulation, or provision of the SDMC [§129.0101 PDF](#).

VI. Fees

The following non-refundable processing fees will be assessed:

Fee Type	Charge
Temporary Certificate of Occupancy	\$353.13
Reissuing Certificate of Occupancy	\$353.13
Additional Hourly Fees <i>May be assessed if additional research and review time is required.</i>	\$176.84/hr.

VII. Previous Versions of this Information Bulletin

- [2026-05-04|IB-585 PDF](#)
- [2025-02-26 | IB-585 PDF](#)
- [2024-12-31|IB-585 PDF](#)