

INFORMATION  
BULLETIN

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## How to Obtain an Occupant Load Sign

This information bulletin describes the procedures for obtaining an occupant load sign for assembly rooms or spaces within existing buildings. Projects proposing an increase in the occupant load within an existing permitted assembly space and/or a change of occupancy classification will be required to obtain a new building permit.

### I. What is an Occupant Load Sign and When is it Required?

Every assembly occupancy room or space with 50 or more occupants shall have the occupant load of the room or space posted in a conspicuous place near the main exit or exit access doorway. Occupant load signs indicate the maximum number of people allowed to occupy a public assembly room or space at any given time and include staff. The occupant load sign is critical as it gives rapid information that is readily available for the prevention of overcrowding.

A new occupant load sign is required if an occupant load sign is not present, appears to be inaccurate or has otherwise been modified.

### II. Does the City of San Diego Issue an “Official” Occupant Load Sign?

The City of San Diego does not issue an “official” occupant load sign. An occupant load sign must be procured by the permit holder. Posted signs shall be of an approved, legible permanent design and shall be maintained by the owner or the owner’s authorized agent.

### III. How to Verify Occupant Load and Occupant Load Signs?

If an occupant load sign is missing, is inaccurate or has been modified, a building permit is required to verify occupant load. The applicant must submit previously approved plans for verification of the occupant load within an existing, permitted assembly room or space.

If the previously approved plans are not provided, it will be assumed that the assembly space was constructed without permits and that a building permit must be obtained (see [Land Development Manual Project Submittal Requirements](#), Section 2 for new building permit applications). All existing and proposed tenant space work will be reviewed/inspected per the Building Code in effect at the time of project submittal.

### IV. Submittal Requirements

To apply for a permit for occupant load sign verification, submit a copy of the approved building construction plans (in PDF format) that permitted the assembly occupancy. The approved plans shall include, at a minimum:

1. Site plan and/or title sheet showing the project location, occupancy classification and occupant loads.
2. Floor Plan(s).

### V. Fees

See [Information Bulletin 501](#) for fees. Hourly Plan Review and Inspection fees will apply.

### VI. Permit Submittal

Building permits to verify occupant load must be submitted electronically through the Development Services Department [online portal](#) by selecting the Building Permit option (select Rapid Review for quickest service). An appointment can be scheduled to assist applicants in the submittal process through the [DSD website](#).

### VII. Inspections

A Final inspection will be required to confirm the building conditions match the previously permitted plans.

Visit our website: [sandiego.gov/dsd](http://sandiego.gov/dsd).

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