

Certificates of Occupancy

Purpose: Certificates of Occupancy are required by state law and local ordinance to certify that buildings are built in accordance with the appropriate construction codes and have received all required inspections. The certificate is required prior to using or occupying any structure (residential or commercial) or tenant space within a building.

The certificate identifies the permitted use of the building under the Uniform Construction Code and identifies any special stipulations or limitations.

The Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Building Code Official does not supersede or replace any other document or approvals as required by other city departments or bureaus.

A Building Code Official may deny a Certificate of Occupancy if the building is deemed to be unsafe.

Why should I be concerned about having a Certificate of Occupancy?: Legal occupancy of any structure constructed after April 27, 1927 requires a certificate. This document provides information and protections from revised building code requirements that have occurred through time that could have a negative impact on the specific use of a given building, including financial requirements to bring a building up to current code standards required before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued.

Certified Buildings: Those buildings with a valid Certificate of Occupancy.

Uncertified Buildings: A building built after April 27, 1927 that does not have a valid Certificate of Occupancy.

A Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued if it meets the latest version (in Pennsylvania) of the International Existing Building Code **or** Chapter 34 of the International Building Code.

“An uncertified building which was built before April 27, 1927, shall be deemed a certified building for the purposes of this act.”

When approval is required:

1. Upon completion of any construction project within a defined space or building/structure which, a building permit and inspections are required. This could be a new building, shell only, tenant build out, renovated space(s) or addition to an existing structure. Remodeling residential rooms or spaces including porches also requires a Certificate.
2. Any change of use as defined by the building code also requires a new Certificate of Occupancy.
3. Any request by a lender or property owner for a Certificate of Occupancy requires a completed application, fee and inspection by a Lancaster City Code Official.

How to apply: Application for Certificate of Occupancy.

http://www.cityoflanasterpa.com/lanastercity/lib/lanastercity/application_for_certificate_of_occupancy_for_existing_buildings.pdf

Temporary Certificates of Occupancy: are only issued for commercial establishments for a specified time period as stated on the Certificate. Use beyond the certificate expiration date may subject the holder to fines and penalties as prescribed in city ordinances or resolutions.

Certificates of Occupancy that were previously issued by Labor & Industry prior to 2004 are valid documents and should be maintained on file with the property records. To request an L&I C/O, contact L&I at (717) 787-3806. The city does not maintain copies of L&I issued documents.