

City of Arvada

(Updated February 5, 2009)

Checklist for Residential Building Use to Commercial Building Use

General:

- 1) Provide floor plan and site plan with dimensions. (Identify use of various rooms)
- 2) Fill out a Change of Use form and circulate to all affected divisions and departments.
- 3) This is a change of occupancy therefore the building must be brought into compliance with the current codes for the proposed use. It is treated almost as if it were a new building. Since it is an existing building, some judgment calls may have to be made.

Building Code Issues:

- 1) Steps inside and out need handrails. Guardrails may also be required. They are to be installed as per the current code. Steps should be improved to current code if they are modified in any way, or if they are deemed unsafe. Some locations may require guardrails and they are required to be 42" high.
- 2) The building and bathrooms are to be accessible. This is a requirement that cannot be waived. The main problems encountered are usually, the need for a ramp to the front and rear doors. Doors into the house and bathrooms need to be 36" so that they provide a clear opening of 32". A new toilet designed for the disabled and grab bars must be provided. To obtain the room necessary for maneuvering (60" diameter circle is the goal, however in existing construction, a lesser amount may be accepted.) the bathtub may have to be removed. Floor levels at doors and throughout the building to be in compliance for accessibility. (An informational handout on ramps is available)
- 3) Exterior walls of a building and the openings in those walls for doors and windows may need to have a fire resistive rating due to their proximity to property lines. A "residential use" allows the exterior building walls and openings (doors and windows) to be unprotected when they are located greater than 3' from the property line. When the use is changed to a "commercial use", a more hazardous use, the setbacks for unprotected walls and openings relative to a property line is much greater. For standard wood frame construction, no openings are allowed if less than 3' to a property line. For exterior walls more than 3' but less than 10' to a property line, the openings must have a fire protective rating. This rating is ¾ hr in a 1-hr wall. Wire glass is considered to provide the equivalent of a ¾ hr fire resistive rating of these openings. (More specific information can be found in Table 715.5 and 715.3 of the 2006 International Building Code). When the exterior walls, are greater than 10' from the property line they generally do not need to be rated for most building uses and construction types. In "B" (office) occupancies if the exterior wall is less than 10' to a property line it needs to be 1-hour rated. In "M" (retail sales) occupancy if the exterior wall is less than 10' to a property line a 2-hour fire protective rating is required. (Additional information is in Chapter 6 of the 2006 IBC, Table 602.)

Note: It is typical in the IBC, that walls less than 5' to a property line need protection inside and outside (such as a 1-hour wall usually achieved by 5/8" drywall, inside and outside). Exterior walls that are greater than 5' and up to 10' from a property line require a fire resistive rating for exposure from the inside only.

- 4) Adequate light and ventilation must be provided to all habitable rooms.
- 5) Windows within 24" of a door swing are to be of safety glazing and safety glass is required in all hazardous locations as per the building code requirements.
- 6) Often the kitchen of the house is converted to an employee lounge. The stove must be removed or a hood with an approved extinguishing system needs to be installed. (An approved residential fire suppression hood may be allowed for minor use.)
- 7) If there is usable space below the first floor, it must be separated from the floor above with a one-hour floor/ceiling assembly when required by the IBC. That is usually

achieved by putting 5/8" Type X drywall on the ceiling of the basement. A fire-rated door and closer may also be required at the top or bottom of the stairs. This is required if the space is greater than 1000 sq ft (3000 sq ft if sprinkler installed), always required in the Olde Town Arvada area.

- 8) The floor load requirements need to be verified to meet the loads required for the proposed use.
- 9) Generally, unless modifications are made for accessibility for disabled, floors other than the 1st floor cannot be used by a separate tenant. (See exception in Chapter 11 of the IBC.)
- 10) If the basement is used for anything other than storage, exiting, light and ventilation, and other code requirements will have to be reviewed for the proposal use.
- 11) In old homes converted to commercial use, the stairs to the basement and attic are often non-compliant. If the stairs to the basement, second floor or attic do not meet the requirements of the current code and they cannot be brought into compliance, and these areas are used for anything but storage a second code complaint exit may be required.

Electrical:

- 1) The electrical service to the building may need to be upgraded.
- 2) Make certain there is an outside main disconnect, outside the building.
- 3) Check for outlets in the bathroom, kitchen and outside. Make sure they are on a ground-fault.
- 4) Have a licensed electrician check and repair the overall house wiring. An electrical permit is required.
- 5) Smoke detectors and exit lights are required as per the fire code.

Plumbing:

- 1) If new plumbing fixtures are installed, they must be of the water saving type. (ULV)
- 2) The water closet (toilet) must be of a type for the disabled, and installed with the proper clearances.
- 3) The lavatory (sink) must also be of a type that the disabled person can roll the wheelchair under the lavatory, with protection of the pipes, and access the lever handles on the faucets.

Mechanical:

- 1) Verify that the furnace is adequate and that combustion air is provided.
- 2) Natural or mechanical ventilation required in all habitable rooms.

Fire Inspection:

- 1) Satisfy all requirements of the fire code and Fire Marshal, such as exit signs, fire extinguishers, occupant load posting to name a few.

Other:

- 1) Satisfy all requirements of the Community Development Department and all other Departments and Divisions who are a part of the commercial plan review process. Historic guidelines apply to most of the old homes in the old town area that are converted to commercial use.
- 2) Obtain a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) prior to opening for business.
- 3) Obtain a business license from the Sales Tax Division.
- 4) Sign permits require a separate approval and a separate permit.
- 5) Fence permits require approval and a separate permit.
- 6) A parking space for the disabled must be provided at an approved, convenient location.
- 7) In old homes with a small attic area, that space may be used for a private office or storage if approved by the Fire Marshal and Building Official. Like the basement, if the intention is to use this space for the public, a second approved exit may be required and the existing stairs may need to be improved.

Note: Disclaimer

This handout is provided as a courtesy to direct your attention to some important code concerns. It is not an all inclusive document and various sections may or may not apply to your specific project. This document is informational only and you should refer to the adopted building codes and sections specific to your project to insure total compliance.