Determining Occupant Load/Capacity

Under Governor Inslee's Phase 2 Re-opening plan, certain businesses can re-open but at reduced capacity. For businesses with a posted occupant load, or a certificate of occupancy that stipulates occupant load, that should be used as the basis to determine the reduced capacity per the order. But many businesses do not have a posted occupant load and are trying to determine what their occupant load is in order to comply with the reduced capacity requirements of the Governor's Plan.

We want to assist you and have developed this guide to help you determine how to meet the occupancy expectations under Governor Inslee's Phased Plan.

If you have access to the permit or design plan documents for your business, the front page of the documents typically contains occupant load calculations.

If you do not have access to the permit or design documents, the following may help you determine the occupant load.

In areas without fixed seats, the occupant load is determined based on the use of the space. For example:

Restaurants:

Areas with tables and chairs: 15 s.f./person

Example: Restaurant area of 3,000 s.f. (do not include kitchen and other "back of house" functions): 3,000/15 = 200 persons.

Phase 2 Re-Opening: Maximum 50% Capacity – no bar seating. In this example, the maximum capacity would be limited to 100 persons.

Retail (not including malls): 60 s.f./person

Example: Store area of 1,500 s.f. (do not include storeroom and other "back of house" functions): 1,500/60 = 25 persons

Phase 2 Re-Opening: Maximum 30% Capacity. In this example, the maximum occupancy would be 7 in addition to the employees. The Governor's plan requires that the reduced occupant load is posted conspicuously at the store entrance.

Building and Fire Codes are used to determine the occupant load of buildings and spaces. The determination is used to ensure that there are enough exits, they are properly separated, and of sufficient width so that in an emergency occupants can safely evacuate. The reduced occupant load required by the Governor's Phase 2 reopening reduces the normally allowable occupant load to help maintain proper physical distancing for health reasons.

Need additional help? An online occupant load estimator is available at: https://www.fireinspection360.com/occupantload. Please remember that this will provide the building and fire code occupant load that must be further reduced in accordance with the Governor's Phase 2 reopening requirements.

You can also contact our Fire Marshal's Office at (425) 276-9580 or the City of Renton Permit Desk at (425) 430-7200 for additional assistance as well.