



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

TO: Development Services Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 127**
Determining Occupant Load

DATE: October 9, 2006
See revision chart for revision dates

CREATED BY: Building Development Division

Purpose:

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) created revised Information Bulletin (IB) 127 on determining occupant load with the International Building Code (IBC). Section 1004 of the IBC lists requirements for determination of the occupant load of a building/space. The occupant load is used to determine design requirements such as occupancy classification, means of egress, required fire protection systems, etc. This IB has been updated to include changes to the submittal requirements, process and associated fees.

This submittal process detailed below can be used to adjust the calculated occupant load for an application or permit number which is currently or has already been reviewed. These submissions should be uploaded to their respective application or permit record and may also be emailed to **DevelopmentServicesCustomerService@sanantonio.gov**.

Requests to modify the calculated occupant load where a Certificate of Occupancy has already been issued should also be emailed to **DevelopmentServicesCustomerService@sanantonio.gov**

Scope:

Per Section 1004.5, the minimum occupant load for areas without fixed seating is determined by dividing the floor area under consideration by the applicable 'occupant per unit of area factor' listed in Table 1004.5. However, this section includes the following exception:

Where approved by the building official, the actual number of occupants for whom each occupied space, floor or building is designed, although less than those determined by calculation shall be permitted to be used in the determination of the design occupant load.

Further Section 1004.5.1 allows for an increase in occupants over that calculated by Table 1004.5 if all life safety system requirements are met.

The intent of these sections is to allow the Building Official to review and evaluate unusual design conditions on a case-by-case basis. Where a customer wishes to utilize these sections in their design or adjust an existing occupant load, the customer is required to submit the attached application form, a written proposal, and drawing(s) to Development Services for review.

Application Form (attached) Requirements:

- 1) Describe the intended use of the building or space.
- 2) Clearly indicate the calculated occupant load using Table 1004.5. The calculated occupant load may come from construction plans previously provided by an architect, calculated by Plan Review staff, or may be a calculated occupant load from a City inspector.
- 3) Clearly indicate the proposed occupant load.
- 4) Provide the reason the increase or decrease in the occupant load is requested.
- 5) If the project requires an architect registered with the State of Texas, the application is required to be signed by the architect. The application is also required to be countersigned by the owner.
- 6) Fill out remaining contact information and other fields.

Additional Requirements - Written Proposal & Drawings:

- 1) Include a letter with explanation why the calculation method prescribed in Section 1004.5 and Table 1004.5 is not appropriate or applicable to the design or the business model of the building or space.
- 2) Provide the rationale why the increase or decrease in occupant load for a building/space is justifiable.
- 3) Include scaled drawings with the building or space layout with any fixed or proposed seating to support the proposed occupant load. Ensure all rooms are labeled and include square footage and/or dimensions.
- 4) For a proposed increase in occupant load, provide the number and locations of required exits and stairwells. Provided the widths of exits and stairwells.
- 5) Indicate whether a fire sprinkler system and a fire alarm system currently exist, or systems proposed.
- 6) Provide the layout and indicate the number of plumbing fixtures (existing or proposed).
- 7) If a building permit application is already submitted to the City, a reference to the permit number is adequate so that the submitted plans may be reviewed as part of the analysis/determination of the request.

Note:

For an Assembly Occupancy - Group A, that serves alcohol, an architect is required to provide the documents above (letter, scaled drawings, calculations and life safety plan).

If the change in occupant load request is for an existing application in review (remodel, new building, addition, etc.), many of the documents above may already be submitted in the Life Safety plan. In this case, only the application form in this IB and the letter would be required.

If the change in occupant load is for an existing Certificate of Occupancy, please provide a copy of the existing Certificate.

Development Service Engineers and/or other Development Services team members shall review the proposal and make a determination. If approved, the Department shall respond to the proposal in writing, and if denied, will reach out through email communication. The estimated turnaround time for review and action is five (5) business days. For proposed changes to existing Certificates of Occupancy, a building inspection will be conducted in the field.

Request Fees:

For a request to change the calculated occupant load on an application or permit number which is currently or has already been reviewed, a fee of \$100 will be assessed.

For a request to change the occupant load on an existing Certificate of Occupancy, a fee of \$150 will be assessed.

Should the customer be dissatisfied with the ruling taken on the request, the customer may appeal the ruling to the Building-Related and Fire Code Appeals and Advisory Board in accordance with Chapter 10 of the City codes.

Summary:

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Occupant Load Change Request Application

PROJECT INFO: (Complete all the following fields, please print)

Application #: (if applicable)		Existing Certificate of Occupancy # (if applicable)	
Project or Business Name:			
Project Address:			
City:		State:	Zip:
Intended or Current Use of Space:			
Calculated Occupant Load per Table 1004.5:			
Requested Occupant Load:			
Reason for the Increased or Decreased Occupant Load:			

APPLICANT INFO (If project requires a Registered Architect, they will be the applicant)

Applicant Name:		
Company Name:		
Company Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Email:	
Applicant Signature:		Date:

OWNER INFO

Owner's Name (print):	
Owner's Signature:	Date:

Version History – IB 127