



# RUTHERFORD COUNTY BUILDING CODES DEPARTMENT

*Creating a Sustainable Future Through Building Standards and Safety*

## **COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY CHECKLIST**

The purpose of this handout is to explain the Certificate of Occupancy/Use (C/O) process for Rutherford County, the responsibility of the applicant, and the responsibility of each County agency in recommending approval of the C/O to the Building Official. The C/O is the final document issued by the Building Official to authorize the occupancy of a structure upon completion of all building components, per the International Building Code.

The C/O ensures the final approval of all newly issued building and associated trade permits, the completion of required grading or other site plan items, and compliance with all applicable departments and Special Use Permit (SUP) conditions.

It is highly recommended that a one week 'cushion' be allowed between the completion of construction and the intended settlement date, 'move-in' date, or events requiring an issued C/O. This one-week period will allow for any noted deficiencies to be corrected in time for the scheduled settlement/opening without delay. While Building Codes usually conducts final inspections on the date requested, the typical review time for a C/O is 1-3 business days, and outside agencies may require *additional* time for their inspections. It is important to designate one person to coordinate the inspection process, communicate with the inspection agencies to resolve any inspection disapprovals, and then follow up with Building Codes to obtain the Certificate of Occupancy.

Even with the best planning and communications, it is sometimes necessary to request to move furniture in or stock goods prior to the CO being approved and issued. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and require the approval of the Building Official or designee. In order for a temporary CO to be considered, all portions of the structure to be occupied must not endanger life or public safety. This means that required fire alarms and/or suppression/sprinkler systems must pass all field acceptance tests; 'common area' issues are complete; accessibility requirements are complete; SUP conditions tied to occupancy are complete; and there are no access/egress issues which would endanger the building occupants. Remember all required conditions must be met before a final CO is issued. A cease and desist order may be placed on the property if all conditions are not met in the required time frame. Please feel free to contact the appropriate agency by the number/email provided should you have any questions about their requirements in preparation for your Final Inspection.

**Rutherford Engineering Dept. 615-898-7730 or [mhughes@rutherfordcountyttn.gov](mailto:mhughes@rutherfordcountyttn.gov)**

In most cases, approval will require compliance with the following items.

1. For special use permits, the applicant shall comply with all conditions of SUP permit approval.
2. Conditions of BZA are met.
3. Exterior HVAC equipment and required screening in place.
4. Approved site inspection from Engineering for occupancy.

Site/Grading approval will require compliance with the following items:

1. All required landscaping and plantings installed.
2. Pavement installed in roadways and parking areas as delineated on the approved site plan.
3. All parking requirements are met and lot is striped as required.
4. There is free access to the building to be occupied. If applicable, fencing installed to separate remaining construction from the area to be occupied.
5. Building/House numbers are posted.

6. Erosion and sediment control conditions are met.
7. Storm and sanitary sewers are clean and functional (not blocked).
8. Roof drains, sump pumps and foundation drains are tied to storm sewer or detention area.
9. Ingress/egress, turnarounds, etc. for emergency vehicles are in place.
10. Accessible parking spaces are properly located, signed, sized, and marked.
11. Site lights are installed and working with approved final inspections.
12. The street and site area are clean free of mud and construction debris.
13. Approved final site inspection for occupancy.
14. As-built survey if required.

**Rutherford County Fire and Rescue Dept. 615-867-4626 or email Fire Marshal Joshua Sanders at [jsanders@rutherfordcountyttn.gov](mailto:jsanders@rutherfordcountyttn.gov)**

1. Fire Protection Systems
  - a. Installed fire alarm and/or sprinkler system is operable with approved final inspection.
  - b. Knox boxes are installed with all access keys.
2. Emergency vehicle signs (EVS) are posted.
3. Yelp sensors installed on gates if required.
4. Sprinkler and fire alarm panel room doors must be labeled if applicable.
5. After a pre-occupancy inspection of the Fire Chief/Marshal, the final building inspection is required.
6. Fire hydrants are installed and painted if required.

**Rutherford County Building Codes Dept. 615-898-7734 or email Tanya Bell @ [tanyabell@rutherfordcountyttn.gov](mailto:tanyabell@rutherfordcountyttn.gov) or Mark Russell at [mrussell@rutherfordcountyttn.gov](mailto:mrussell@rutherfordcountyttn.gov)**

The Building Inspection will be the final inspection you will request after all the aforementioned items have been satisfied. Please stay in contact with your assigned Building Inspector and they will assist in guiding you through this process if necessary. In most cases, approval will require compliance with the following items:

1. All trade permits have received final inspection (electrical, sewer, plumbing and mechanical).
2. Accessibility requirements are met as delineated on approved plans.
3. All third-party inspection reports have been submitted indicating that outstanding issues are satisfied. Be sure to include the Final Statement of Inspections' signed and sealed by your Registered Design Professional (RDP) or Structural Engineer (SER).
4. Submit all special inspections certified by your RDP or SER.
5. All signage has proper permits and inspections.
6. All site plan requirements have been met and approved by Planning/Engineering.
7. Approved pre-occupancy inspection from the Fire Chief/Fire Marshal.
8. Final Subsurface Sewage Disposal System Completion (SSDS) Certificate must be submitted prior to Final Inspection being requested.

### **Health Department – 615-898-7880**

A separate permit to operate may be required by the State Health Department for the following project types:

1. Food (restaurants, quick marts, stores, etc.)
2. Child or adult care (day care centers, retirement homes, schools, etc.)
3. Public swimming pools and spas
4. Health, hair or massage therapy establishments
5. Any business that involves food or health related matters

### **UTILITIES**

Contact the following departments with utility questions.

Middle Tennessee Electric Dept.	615-893-7570
Consolidated Utility District	615-893-7225
TN Dept. Env & Cons. (TDEC)	615-898-7891
MWSD	615-848-3209