



# Building Bulletin

penticton.ca

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## Change of Use – Single Family to Commercial

Building Code requirements for converting SFD into commercial uses.

### Purpose

The intent of this bulletin is to provide general information regarding the conversion of Single Family Dwelling buildings to commercial or mixed commercial/residential uses

### References and Background

Converting residential buildings to commercial operations triggers many regulations that are typically not part of a single family use. Prospective purchasers or owners need to be aware that there could be potentially substantial upgrade requirements for buildings constructed under previous single family building code standards. Some of these requirements may involve significant remedial works for substantial code compliance for exits, protection against the spread of fire (spatial limits), plumbing, ventilation, smoke/fire alarms, energy efficiency and accessibility provisions. This may also involve additional third party reviews such as a structural engineer or Interior Health for food or health service operations. Rural properties may also be required to show proof of on-site sanitary waste disposal system operation for commercial use.

Please note that “secondary suites” as regulated within section 9.37 of the BC Building Code, are not permitted within a building converted to a commercial use.

### BC Building Code (2012)

#### 1.1.1.2. Application to Existing Buildings

1) Where a building is altered, rehabilitated, renovated or repaired, or there is a change in occupancy, the level of life safety and building performance shall not be decreased below a level that already exists.

### Local Authority:

- Building Bylaw No.2018-01 - Building Permits required for Change of Use
- Zoning Bylaw No.2011-23
- Business Licence Bylaw No.2012-5020

### Implementation

Upon conditional support by the Planning department, the Building department staff will review the existing civic files and conduct the following review as outlined below:

1. Code Classification and occupant loads based on proposed occupancy (i.e. office, salon, retail);

2. Structural confirmation by a registered structural engineer to verify floor loads for the intended commercial occupancy. The review should include potential floor loading criteria (office, storage, etc.), occupant loads, existing defects and remedial works required.
3. Fire Separations between floor levels and potential interconnection of heating systems;
4. Spatial separations (control of fire to neighbouring buildings) to property lines, laneways and other structures on the property;
5. Plumbing facilities – Public Use:
  - a. Accessible Washroom,
  - b. Public use toilets – elongated bowl with open front seat, and
  - c. Cross Connection review maybe required. See [Bulletin No.2015-06](#)
6. Electrical/Gas review by Certified contractor or BC Safety Inspector;
7. Exits and Emergency lighting;
8. Accessibility:
  - a. Main entrance,
  - b. Corridor and door widths for staff and patron areas,
  - c. Accessible door handles,
  - d. Unisex universal washroom.
9. Fire Safety Plan; and
10. Alternative Solutions, if required.

## Remedial Work & Permits

### Moving forward with conversion:

A building permit will be required for remedial upgrade improvements prior to work commencing and Business Licence approval. A site plan showing parking and access to the building will be required as well as detailed, scaled floor plans of the proposed floor layouts. Projects requiring Registered Professionals will be required to provide Letters of Assurance. For more information regarding building permits, please contact the building department at 250-490-2571 or [buildinginfo@penticton.ca](mailto:buildinginfo@penticton.ca).

### No conversion but work previously completed without permits:

A building permit and remedial work may still be required even if you do not wish to continue the conversion process. Works that have been completed without the necessary permits may pose a health and fire safety risk for occupants and future owners. Therefore, remedial works will be required to meet minimum life safety requirements. This may also require on-site reviews by registered professionals, plumbing, electrical and gas trades persons. Failure to complete the permit process may lead to enforcement action including registration of Section 57 Notice on Title as regulated within the Community Charter.

## Fees

The fee for a preliminary file and site review is \$250.00. The applicant will be provided a report establishing potential requirements for remedial improvements. This report should be reviewed in consultation with a designer and/or general contractor qualified in commercial code requirements. For current permit application fees, please see [Building Fee Schedule](#).

*Have questions? We're here to help.* Please contact the Building Department at 250-490-2571 or [buildinginfo@penticton.ca](mailto:buildinginfo@penticton.ca) for more information.

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