



MACON-BIBB COUNTY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Frequently Asked Questions: Certificate of Occupancy

The following are common questions asked by homeowners and contractors seeking guidance as to when Macon-Bibb County issues a Certificate of Occupancy for permitted construction.

Question #1: What is a Certificate of Occupancy?

The Certificate of Occupancy is a document signed by the Chief Building Official which certifies that the described building, or portion thereof, complies with the requirements of the adopted codes and standards for the intended use and occupancy.

Question #2: When will Macon-Bibb County issue a Certificate of Occupancy?

Macon-Bibb County will not issue a Certificate of Occupancy for the building or tenant space until all inspections have been completed to verify compliance with the adopted codes and standards for the intended use and occupancy.

Questions #3: Can I move into my building or tenant space without a Certificate of Occupancy?

No. A building or tenant space may not be occupied until all inspections have been completed to verify compliance with the adopted codes and standards for the intended use and occupancy.

Question #4: Under what circumstances will a Certificate of Occupancy be issued?

A Certificate of Occupancy is issued for the following:

1. The construction of a new residential or commercial building.
2. The use or occupancy type of the commercial building or tenant space does not match the previous use or occupancy type of the previous tenant, as established by the current adopted editions of the Life Safety Code and International Building Code.

As an example, a restaurant (Assembly use) is moving into a retail (Mercantile use) location. This space will need to undergo a change of occupancy to demonstrate that the space can support the new use.

3. The building or tenant space is new or has been recently remodeled as a white box or shell without a Certificate of Occupancy.

This space is essentially a blank slate, which currently does not have an established use or occupancy type. This space would require plans to undergo a change of occupancy to support the new use.

4. The use within the building or tenant space has increase to a higher hazard level.

As an example, an office is a Business use (Group B occupancy) and the use changes to an outpatient surgery center, which is also a Business use. However, the outpatient surgery has the potential of having patients that are incapable of self-preservation, which would engender a review of the facility. Whereas, a grocery store, which is a Mercantile use (Group M occupancy) is being converted to another Mercantile use, like an auto parts store would not engender the need for a Certificate of Occupancy.

Questions #5: My existing building or tenant space does not have a Certificate of Occupancy; can I have a new Certificate of Occupancy issued?

Macon-Bibb County contains dwellings and commercial buildings that pre-date the issuance of Certificates of Occupancy; however, we recognize that through continue use of the dwelling or commercial building the occupancy rights have already been established. The issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy establishes that the building complies with those codes and standards in affect at the date of issuance. We cannot retroactively verify that your building complies with the code and standards in affect at the date the occupancy rights were established.

If a new Certificate of Occupancy is required for your building, plans must be submitted, a permit must be issued, and inspections must occur to verify that the building complies with the current codes. This process is necessary to verify compliance with the codes in effect for the use or occupancy type. Once the use or occupancy type has been verified in compliance with the adopted codes, Macon-Bibb County will issue a new Certificate of Occupancy.

Questions #6: Will Macon-Bibb County issue a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy?

Yes, Temporary Certificates of Occupancy may be issued under the following conditions:

1. The building is public use (commercial) and not a private dwelling. This would exclude dwellings, hotels, motels, and apartments from the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy process.
2. All life safety issues must be resolved and approved through the inspection process.
3. The fire protection systems must be in place, as required by the scope of work for the permit. This would include passive fire protection systems like fire resistance rated assemblies, and active fire protection assemblies like automatic sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems.
4. The Temporary Certificate of Occupancy may not exceed 30 (thirty) calendar days. The end of the 30 (thirty) days, the applicant may petition the Chief Building Official for another period not exceeding 30 (thirty) calendar days.
5. The issuance of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy will include conditions stipulated by Macon-Bibb County. The petitioner for the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy acknowledges at Macon-Bibb County may revoke the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for failure to comply with the conditions established for temporary occupancy.

Questions #7: Under what conditions will Macon-Bibb County issue a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy?

Once all life safety issues have been resolved, and all final inspections have been approved except for the outstanding construction issue. Macon-Bibb County may issue a conditional Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for completion of certain portion of the project that do not affect life safety in the building.