

Occupancy Permit Scenario Flowcharts – New or Relocating Businesses

Occupancy and Building/Trade permit requirements

PURPOSE

The following information clarifies the occupancy permit requirements within the City of Medicine Hat for new or relocating businesses. These requirements vary based on the business's use of the building and the buildings occupancy classification group according to the Building Code. Additional requirements may apply if renovations are undertaken, either voluntarily or to comply with relevant codes as identified during an occupancy inspection.

Change of Use – *This occurs when the purpose of an existing building changes within the same occupancy classification group, altering its specific function. For example, a space previously operating as a hair salon that transitions into a dental office would represent a "Change of Use" within the Group D classification, as both uses remain within the same occupancy classification category.*

Change of Occupancy Classification – *occurs when the use of an existing building transitions from one occupancy classification group to another. Such changes always require a Building Permit (which may be issued as an occupancy permit), as mandated by the regulatory framework outlined in the Building Code. For example, converting a space previously used as a bowling alley (Group A) into a supermarket (Group E) constitutes a "Change of Occupancy Classification," since the two uses belong to different occupancy classification groups.*

*In Summary, a **change of use** refers to how a building is utilized within the same occupancy classification group, and a **change of occupancy classification** involves changing the buildings occupancy classification from one group to another.*

Professional Involvement – Consult our [Professional Involvement Guide](#) to determine whether your project requires involvement of a Registered Professional Architect and/or Engineer(s). Ideally, professionals are engaged early in the planning process to help evaluate the feasibility of a proposed project. Their expertise allows for an assessment of required codes to be met and may provide estimated associated costs before committing to a specific location. Additionally, our Safety Codes Officers are available to help determine whether registered professionals are required, based on your project's location, size and proposed use.

Process – *Once a suitable location has been chosen, the first application to be submitted should be for a business license. Upon receipt of the business license application, our Licensing Technicians will evaluate the proposal and facilitate feedback from all relevant parties, including Development and Safety Codes. After the review process is completed, the applicant will be informed of the next steps, including any additional documentation required and/or permit application requirements.*

[Business License - City of Medicine Hat](#)

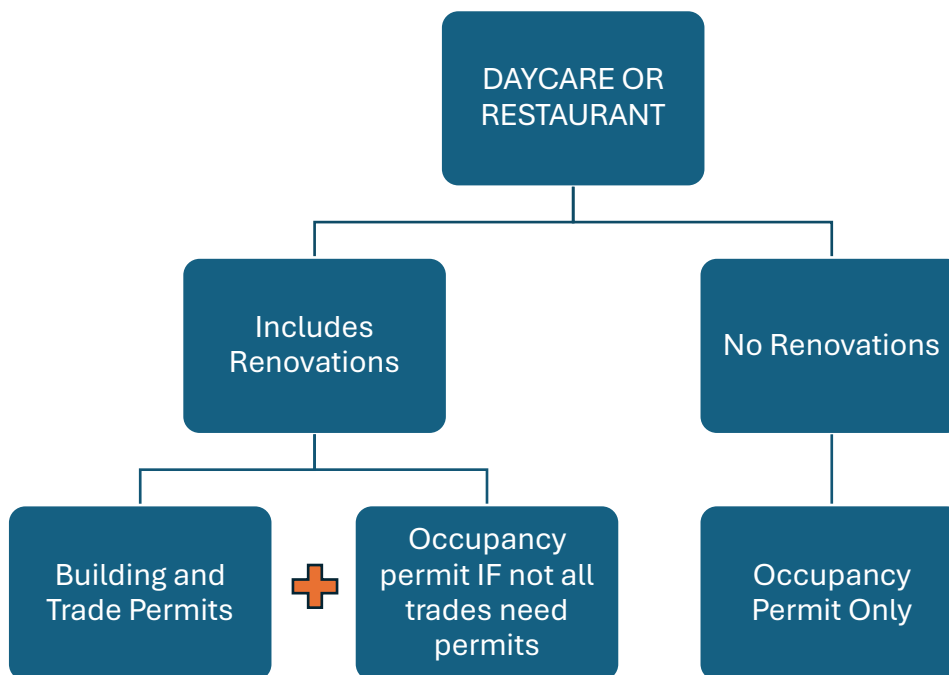
Major Occupancy Classification Group Examples:

Major Occupancy Classifications and Uses			
Assembly		Buildings for the assembly of people for civic, political, travel, religious, social, educational or recreational purposes, or for eating food or drink.	
Group A	Division 1	Production / viewing of performing arts	Opera houses, TV studios, Theatres
Group A	Division 2	Not elsewhere classified in Group A	Community halls, Daycares, Libraries, Churches, Pubs, Night clubs, Schools
			Fitness facilities for more than 40 people at one time.
			Restaurants and cafes with seating for more than 30 people.
Group A	Division 3	Arena type	Arenas, rinks, Indoor swimming pools
Group A	Division 4	Occupants are gathered in the open air	Amusement parks, Bleachers, Stadia
Institutional		Buildings for the detention, treatment or care of people who may not be able to evacuate to a safe location without help or have other special considerations. Includes impeded egress zones and contained use areas.	
B1 - Detention		People are restrained or cannot evacuate without help because of security measures not under their control.	Jails, prisons and penitentiaries, Police stations with detention quarters, Psychiatric hospitals and reformatories with detention quarters
B2 - Treatment		Treatment is provided for medical or other health-related reasons and where overnight accommodations are available.	Convalescent and hospice centres, Hospitals and Infirmarys, Nursing homes with treatment
B3 - Care		Care is provided to residents who require services because of cognitive, physical or behavioural limitations.	Care facilities, Children's custodial homes, Group homes, Hospices, Nursing homes
B4 – Home-type Care		A single detached housekeeping unit where care is provided.	Children’s custodial homes, Convalescent homes, Group homes
Residential		Buildings where sleeping accommodation are provided but does not include detention, treatment or care.	
C		Apartments, Houses, Convents, Dormitories, Hotels, Motels, residential Schools	
Business and Personal Services		Buildings for conducting business or providing professional or personal services.	
D	Banks, Barber hairdressers and beauty salons, Offices, Small tool and appliance rental and service shops.		
	Small fitness facilities for not more than 40 people at one time may be classified as Group D instead of Group A2 occupancy.		
Major Occupancy Classifications and Uses			
Mercantile		Displaying or selling of retail goods, wares or merchandise	
E	Department stores, Exhibition halls, Markets, Shops, Stores, Supermarkets		
	Small restaurants with seating for 30 people or less may be classified as a Group E instead of Group A2 occupancy.		
Industrial		Assembling, fabricating, manufacturing, processing, repairing or storing of goods and materials	
Group F	Division 1	High-hazard Industrial – contains combustible and flammable or explosive materials that constitute a special fire hazard	Bulk plants or storage for hazardous materials, Chemical manufacturing or processing, Distilleries, Flour mills, Spray painting operations
Group F	Division 2	Medium-hazard Industrial – contains high quantities of combustible content and not classified as a high-hazard industrial occupancy	Hangars, Electrical substations, Factories, Laboratories, Repair garages, Service stations, Storage rooms, Warehouses, Woodworking shops and Workshops
Group F	Division 3	Low-hazard Industrial – contains low quantities of combustible content	Factories, Laboratories, Power plants, Storage garages, Storage rooms, Warehouses and Workshops

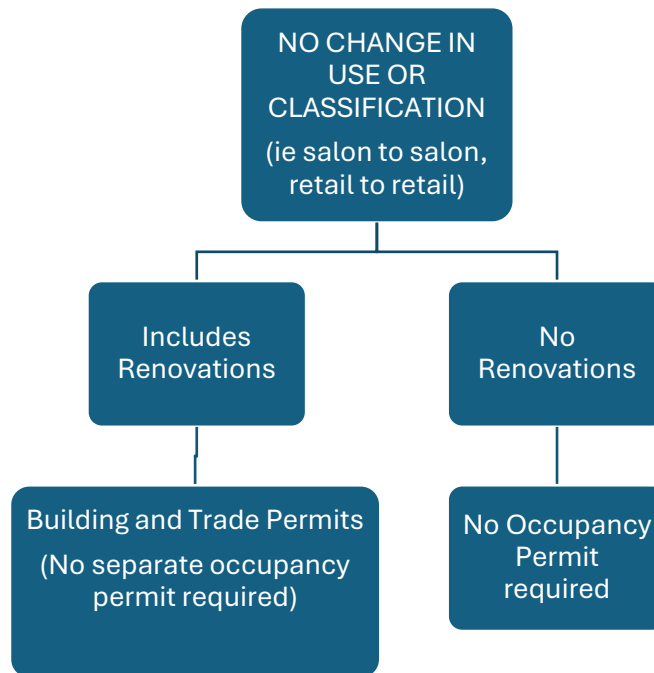
Occupancy Scenario Flow Charts

Intended to provide clarity on occupancy, building and trade permit requirements for each scenario outlined. Utilize the Major Occupancy Chart above to determine the buildings current use compared to the proposed use and follow the chart that best applies to the scenario. The following serves as a guideline and is not exhaustive. Further requirements may be identified during application review.

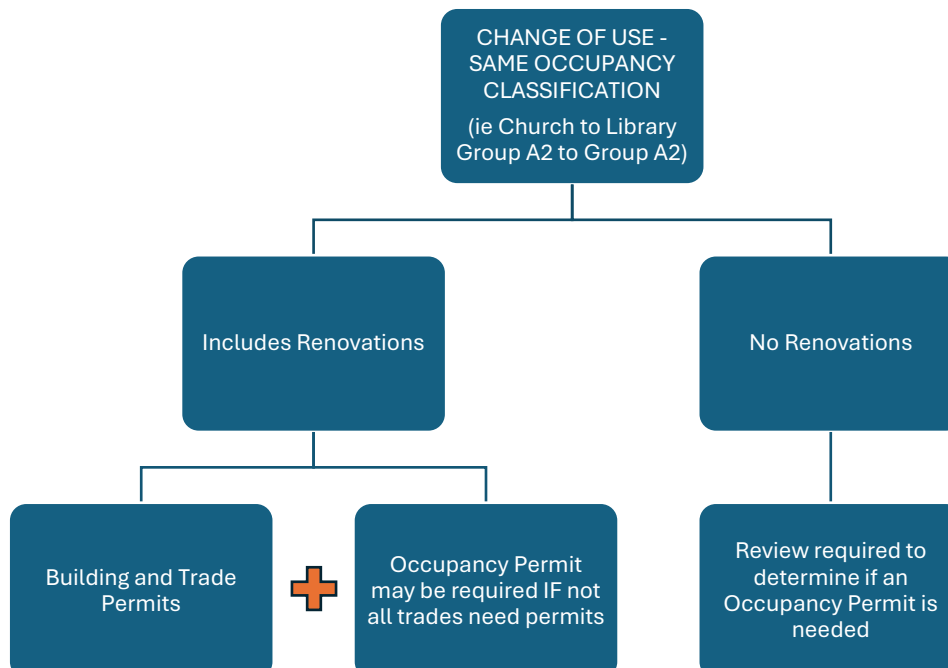
Daycares or Restaurants – Due to the intricate nature of occupancy loads and life safety requirements, daycare and restaurant uses must always obtain an occupancy permit. If renovations are taking place, occupancy may be granted on the building permit provided all trades (plumbing, gas, electrical) permits are in place. If trade work is not required as part of the renovation, a separate occupancy permit is still required to ensure the existing plumbing, gas, heating and electrical systems comply with the relevant code requirements.



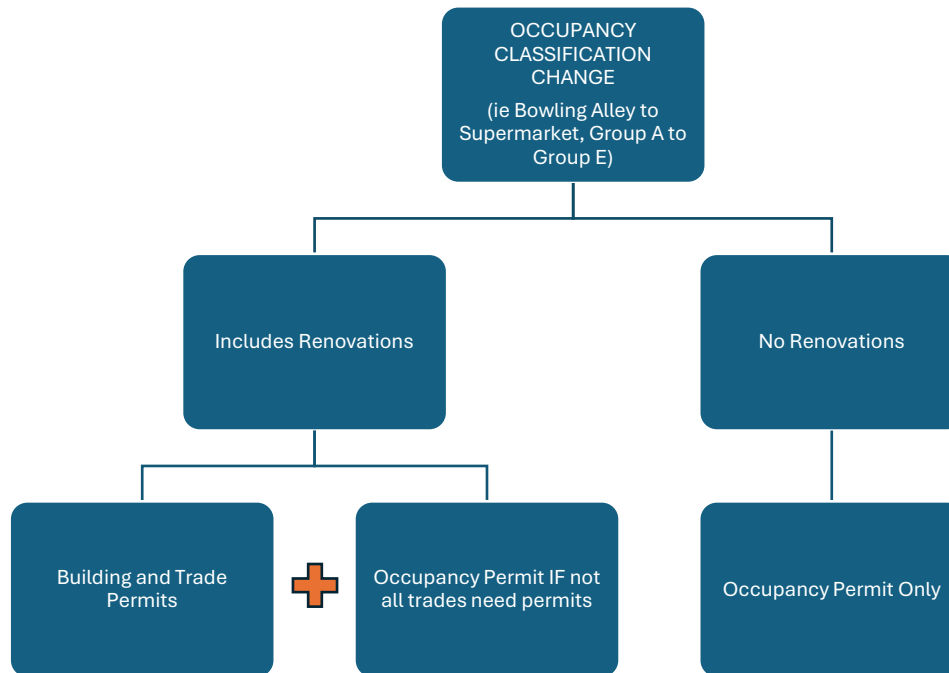
Occupancies with no change in use or building classification – Buildings where the intended use remains unchanged from the previous approved use (Retail store to Retail store, or Salon to Salon), do not require occupancy permits as both the use and the occupancy classification group remain unchanged. However, if renovations are to be conducted, the necessary building and/or trade permits must still be obtained.



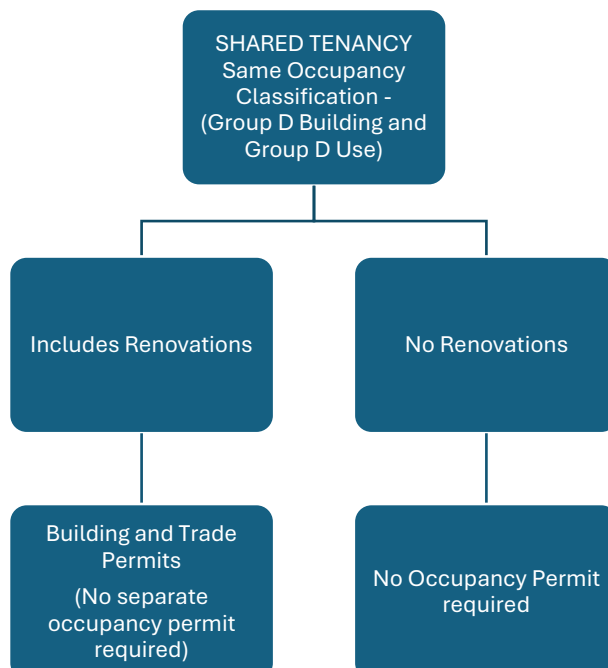
Occupancies with a change of use within the same occupancy classification group – For buildings where the intended use changes within the same occupancy classification group, the requirements depend on the proposed use and whether renovations are undertaken. If no renovations are involved, a review is required to determine if an occupancy permit will be required. If renovations are to be conducted, the necessary associated permits must be obtained, and an occupancy permit may still be required if permits are not needed for all trade disciplines.



Occupancies with a change to the occupancy classification group – For buildings where the occupancy classification will experience a change from the previous designation, a Building Permit is always required (this may be issued as an occupancy permit). If renovations are taking place, occupancy may be granted on the building permit provided all trades (plumbing, gas, electrical) permits are in place. If trade work is not required as part of the renovation, a separate occupancy permit is still required to ensure the existing plumbing, gas, heating and electrical systems comply with the relevant code requirements.



Shared Tenancy within the same use and building occupancy classification - GROUP D BUILDING AND GROUP D USE ONLY – Shared tenancy refers to cases where independently licensed business operators operate within the same building. If the shared tenancy falls under a Group D use and the building's designated occupancy classification is also Group D (Business and Personal Services), an occupancy permit is typically not required. If renovations are necessary, the relevant building and trade permits must be obtained.



Shared Tenancy, all other proposals – *Shared tenancy refers to cases where independently licensed business operators operate within the same building. For proposals where the sharing tenant's use classification group differs from the building's designated occupancy classification group, the shared tenancy request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as not all shared occupancies can proceed due to regulations prescribed in the Building Code. If approved, the proposed shared tenancy must obtain an occupancy permit, a shared tenancy agreement, and a building permit to ensure adherence to the conditions specified in the agreement. Additionally, trade permits may be required depending on the extent of renovations involved.*

