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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE BUILDING AND SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Non-Construction

Certificate of Occupancy Tenant Improvement Guidelines

Congratulations on your progress toward opening your business in Riverside County!

The Building Code (Sec 111, 2013 CBC) states that each building shall have a **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** specific to the type of business or activity occurring in that space. A **CO** will be required prior to the opening of the new business. Your **CO** must be approved by the Planning Department, Fire Department, and Building Department. *In businesses where food is prepared or served, the approval of the Environmental Health Department shall be required.* A non-construction Certificate of Occupancy may include:

- 1. A business which is changing ownership** (assuming existing business had been permitted). This requires a final Building Department inspection only.
- 2. A "like for like" permitted business change.** For example, a previous insurance business office occupied a space, and now a new insurance business will occupy the same space with no construction proposed. Fire and Building Department inspections will be required.
- 3. A Business which is changing locations or opening in a new space,** and no construction is proposed. Fire and Building Department inspections will be required.

Please continue to page 2

The non-construction certificate of occupancy application will be provided a **Tenant Improvement (TI)** permit number with a **Change of Tenant (COT)** classification for initial review. This is done in order to verify minimum ADA accessibility and occupancy group requirements, and for inspection purposes. For a list of required documents, please refer to the Non-Construction Tenant Improvement Certificate of Occupancy Requirements checklist, which is attached.

However: If the application indicates any type of construction, equipment improvement, interior construction, exterior façade, electrical, mechanical or plumbing work, this would require a full Tenant Improvement permit, with plans submitted as shown in our Tenant Improvement handout.

On the other hand: If you are assuming ownership of an existing permitted business and do not plan any changes in the use or occupancy, or if your business will be occupying a space with *exactly the same* type of permitted business that has vacated and there is no planned construction, you should review the situation with the Building Department, as it may be possible to issue a non-construction Tenant Improvement permit over the counter, allowing you to schedule your Fire Department inspection, and upon fire approval, schedule your final building inspection.

Where construction is proposed, or an occupancy classification change has occurred, alterations or improvements may be required to meet minimum California Building Code requirements. In this case, building plans will be required for submittal under a full Tenant Improvement permit review.