



## COUNTY of FREDERICK

### Inspections Department

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### Certificate of Occupancy (CO) Guide and Checklist

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide and explain the Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) process for Frederick County, Virginia, the responsibility of the applicant (permit holder), and the responsibility of each county agencies recommending approval for the certificate of occupancy to the building official. The C.O. is the final construction document issued by the building official to authorize the occupancy of the structure upon completion of all building components under Section 116.1.1 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). The C.O. ensures the final approval of all **newly issued** buildings and the associated trade permits.

It is highly recommended that at least **one week of time** be given between the completion of construction and the intended settlement date or event requiring the issued CO. This one-week period will allow for any noted deficiencies to be corrected in time for the scheduled settlement/opening without delay. It is important to coordinate the inspection process, communicate with the inspection agencies to resolve any dispute, then follow up with the Building Inspections Office to obtain the C.O.

Even with the best planning and communication, 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 approval by the building code official.

It is sometimes possible for the building official to approve the temporary C.O. of a structure in accordance with Section 116.1.1 of the USBC. For temporary occupancy to be considered, all portions of the structure to be occupied must not endanger life or public safety. This requires that all fire alarms and fire suppression/sprinkler systems must be installed and pass field acceptance tests. Common areas, accessibility and access/egress components including emergency and egress lighting to be installed, inspected, and approved. Additionally, agency approval for a temporary C.O. is required from Frederick County Building Inspections Department, Frederick County Planning & Zoning, and Frederick County Fire Marshall's Office.

### Checklist

To be ready for issuance of a C.O., please use the following checklist to make sure that the project is ready for approval. Please contact each agency per the number provided if you have any questions about what they require or will be inspecting.

#### For **residential project**:

1. Both a **final building** and **Public Works final** must have been performed and passed.

2. All third-party inspections have been submitted.
3. A house number must be posted.
4. A flood plain elevation certificate as-built is required to be submitted (if applicable)

For **commercial project**:

1. All trades must have a final inspection (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)
2. Accessibility requirements must be met as delineated on approved plans.
3. All special inspections and engineering reports must be submitted.
4. All signage must have proper permits and inspections.
5. All buildings must have a building and or address posted.
6. A flood plain elevation certification as built is required to be submitted (if applicable)
7. All site lighting and exterior exit lighting is required.
8. Approvals from the following agencies may be required:
  - **Frederick County Planning and Development (540-665-5651)**
  - **Frederick County Public Works (540-665-5643)**
  - **Frederick County Fire Marshall (540-665-6350)** *only if commercial*
  - **Virginia Department of Health (540-722-3480)** *only if a food service establishment or requiring use of public water and sewer.*
  - **Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (804-625-3033)**
  - **Frederick Water (540-868-1061)**