

Reduced capacity and occupant loads

Retail businesses and places of worship open with restricted capacity

Most retail businesses and places of worship may remain open with capacity limited to 15% of the occupancy set under the Fire Code, with a minimum of 5 customers allowed. The restricted capacity only applies to customers.

Occupancy under the Fire Code

The occupant load is the maximum number of persons allowed within a building or a suite within a building.

Occupant load

All businesses and places of worship with a physical location in Alberta have an occupant load as a requirement of the provincial building and fire codes. Information about your occupant load may or may not be on site.

Finding occupant load

Your building or suite within a building may have an occupant load number posted near the main entrance.

If your building or suite within a building has been recently built or renovated, the building permit documentation will likely contain your occupant load number.

A fire safety codes officer may also have completed an updated occupant load calculation for your business.

Building permit documentation

Your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction (building department) may have information regarding your building permit documentation.

If you don't know how to reach your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction, you can access their contact information via the dropdown list in the following link:

<https://www.safetycodes.ab.ca/permits-inspections/where-to-get-a-permit/>

Approximating restricted capacity

If you are unsure of your current occupant load, and have been unable to locate it, the following steps can help approximate your restricted capacity.

Retail Businesses:

- Retail businesses operating within a shopping centre or mall
- Shopping centres and malls
- Pet supply stores
- Grocery stores
- Pharmacies
- Clothing stores
- Computer and technology stores
- Hardware
- Automotive
- Sporting goods
- Liquor and cannabis
- Gift shops
- Indoor farmers' markets approved by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
- Indoor markets approved by Alberta Health Services

Step one:

Measure the approximate area (square metres) of your floor space used by customers, excluding the washrooms. This is done by measuring the length of one wall and the length of the adjoining wall in metres (not feet).

Step two:

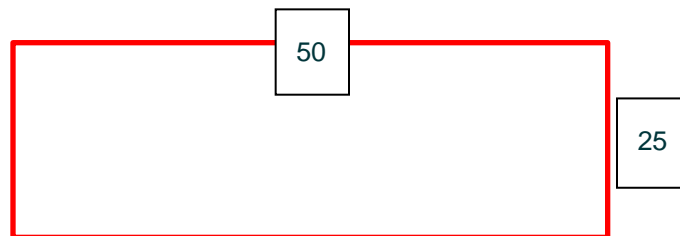
Multiply these two numbers together to get your floor area.

Step three:

Divide this floor area number by **3.7** to determine your usual occupant load.

Step four:

Multiply your usual occupant load by 15% (0.15) to determine your restricted capacity.



Example for retail store:

Step 1: Measure two adjoining walls

- Measured length of north wall = 50 metres
- Measured length of west wall = 25 metres

Step 2: $50 \times 25 = 1250 \text{ metres}^2$

Step 3: 1250 metres² divided by 3.7 = 338 persons

Step 4: 338 x 0.15 = 51 customers

51 customers could be in the retail space in this example. Staff are not subject to the restrictions.

Places of Worship:

Places of worship should have a posted occupant load. Multiply this number by 15% to determine your restricted capacity. If you cannot locate this number, call your local municipality.