



Determining Occupant Load / Capacity

REVISED

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On November 15, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee announced additional restrictions in response to the recent rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus in Washington State and across the country. This document is to assist businesses in determining their occupant loads so they may be in compliance with the Governor's order.

Latest Statewide Restrictions

<https://medium.com/wagovernor/inslee-announces-statewide-restrictions-for-four-weeks-c0b7da87d34e>

For businesses with a posted occupant load, or a certificate of occupancy that stipulates occupant load, that should be used as the basis to determine the reduced capacity per the order. But many businesses do not have a posted occupant load and are trying to determine what their occupant load is in order to comply with the reduced capacity requirements of the Governor's order.

If you have access to the permit or design plan documents for your business, the front page of the documents typically contains occupant load calculations often prepared by a registered architect.

If you do not have access to the permit or design documents, the following may help you determine the occupant load.

Restaurants and Bars:

Effective Wednesday, November 18th, 2020 at 12:01 a.m., restaurants and bars are to be closed for indoor service, with to-go services and restricted outdoor dining allowed.

Religious Services:

Religious services will be limited to 25% indoor capacity or 200 people, whichever is less, and choirs, bands, or ensembles are prohibited from performing. Face coverings are required at all times.

Retail:

Effective Monday, November 16th, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., in-store retail and grocery stores are limited to 25% of their occupant load.

Not including malls: 60 s.f./person

Example: Store area of 2,000 s.f. (does not include storeroom and other "back of house" functions): $2,000 / 60 = 33$ persons. Multiply this number by .25 for the maximum number of people allowed at 25% capacity ($33 \times .25 = 8$).

In this example, the maximum occupancy would be 8 people including the employees.

Building and Fire Codes are used to determine the occupant load (capacity) of buildings and spaces. The determination is used to ensure that there are enough exits, that they are properly separated, and of sufficient width so that in an emergency occupants can safely evacuate. The reduced occupant load required by the Governor's order reduces the normally allowable occupant load to help maintain proper social distancing.

Additional help? An online occupant load estimator is available at this site:

<https://www.fireinspection360.com/occupantload>

You can also contact the Longview Fire Department at fd@mylongview.com or (360) 442-5503 for additional assistance.