



COs for Existing Day Care Centers

Handout

Rev.20170809

Procedure for Obtaining Certificates of Occupancy for Existing Day Care Centers

The Development Services Center, by law, follows the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) as it applies to issuing Certificates of Occupancy (CO). The Department of Early Learning also requires a CO be obtained for a child care center before they will issue a license. Additional information regarding these codes and other regulations specific to the requirement of COs for child care centers can be found on the second page of this handout.

To make this process a bit easier, our department has streamlined the procedure for existing child care center operators (for centers open before January 1, 2005). We are asking owners/operators to provide us with:

1. A completed Commercial Building Permit Application (copy attached).
2. Copies of yearly licenses issued by the Department of Early Learning prior to January 1, 2005.
3. A site plan showing driveways, traffic flow, parking spots, location of building(s), and location of nearest fire hydrants
4. A detailed floor plan (of each floor, including basement) showing layout of classrooms, exits, emergency flow of exiting the building, changing rooms, restrooms, kitchen, office, play areas, exits, and location of fire extinguishers and/or sprinklers and/or fire alarms. The floor plan should also include the names of the operator and/or owner, center address, numbers and ages of children and hours of operation for age groups, and any other helpful information.

Upon receipt of these items, the CO Coordinator will meet with representatives of the Current Planning, Building, Traffic, and Fire Departments and request their approval of the plans. A site visit may be requested. If these departments approve the plans as submitted, a CO can be issued upon payment of the \$50 CO fee plus a \$25 processing fee (total \$75), per SMC 08.02.060.

If a child care center opened after January 1, 2005, or has not yet opened, an application for a Change of Use must be submitted; the approval process requires departmental reviews and will take longer than the shorter procedure outlined above.

The procedures we have in place are necessary for the Development Services Center to (a) comply with the state regulations, (b) ensure the safety of the building(s) being used for child care centers, (c) ensure that children enrolled in the center(s) will have adequate and safe exiting in case of emergency, and (d) that all child care center operators are treated equally and fairly.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact our CO Coordinator at 509-625-6106, or by email at cocoordinator@spokanecity.org.

Regulations/Codes that refer to the requirement for child care centers to have a Certificate of Occupancy:

WAC 170-295-0040 answers the question, "Do I have to follow any other regulations or have any other inspections?"

- (1) "Prior to becoming licensed by us to operate a child care center, you must:
 - (a) Have a **certificate of occupancy** issued by your local building department; and
 - (b) Be inspected by the state fire marshal."

- (2) "In addition to the requirements of this chapter, you are also responsible for complying with any local building ordinances. Local officials are responsible for enforcing city ordinances and county codes, such as zoning and building regulations. You must contact your local building jurisdiction to determine if local ordinances are different than our standards."

This provision also mentions contacting the local planning office, fire marshal, and department of health for any additional regulations.

WAC 170-295-0060 answers the question, "What are the requirements for applying for a license to operate a child care center?"

- (2) "the application package must include the following attachments: (o) **A copy of your occupancy permit.**"

In the **Washington State Department of Early Learning, Application for Child Care Center License or Certification**, number 24 in the License or Certification Instructions states, "Attach to this application any of the documents listed in this section. (a) **Copy of occupancy permit** (WAC 170-295-0060)"

Additionally, the **2015 International Building Code (IBC) 111.1** and the **Spokane Municipal Code 17G.010.170.C** both state that an appropriate Certificate of Occupancy is required before a building can be used and/or occupied.