



Contact Us

**24-Hour
Inspection Line:**
(850) 981-7050

Main:
(850) 981-7000

Email
developmentsservices
@santarosa.fl.gov

Fax Number:
(850) 623-1208

2010 Florida Building Code Effective Today!



Please be advised effective Mar. 15, a change will occur to the Florida Building Code. Effective Mar. 15, all permit applications and plans submitted must comply with the 2010 FBC edition. To view a draft copy of the code online, visit www.floridabuilding.org.

Change of Occupancy: An Easier, Economical Alternative

New business owners make hundreds of decisions before they open their doors. One of those decisions is whether or not to build a new building or to use an existing one. Often the least costly and easiest way is to purchase or lease an existing building.

While moving into an existing space may be less costly and time consuming than new construction, many find that it's not as easy as they first anticipated. In many cases, permits are still required and existing codes must be addressed. The Development Services Center is here to help new business owners navigate the "Change of Occupancy" process.

What is a Change of Occupancy?

The Florida Building Code classifies how a building is used into different categories or "occupancies." Whenever the use of any part of a building changes from one occupancy classification to another, then a "Change of Occupancy" permit is required. For example, a change of occupancy permit is required to use an existing retail store building (a mercantile occupancy) as a doctor's office (a business occupancy) or to increase the seating in a restaurant from less than 50 (a mercantile occupancy) to more than 50 (an Assembly A-2 occupancy).

When the occupancy of a building is changed, the Florida Building Code may require that the building meet all current code requirements for that new use. For example, an old home (an R-3 occupancy) that is to be used as an office building must comply with the same requirements as a new office building.

A "Change of Occupancy" applies to the use of a building only, and should not be confused with any process required by the Land Development Code to change the use of a property. Building occupancy classifications address the impact of the building on the occupants of the building, whereas land use or zoning use classifications tend to focus on the impact of the use on the surrounding properties.

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The Santa Rosa County Tax Collector's Office and the Little Red Barn Bakery Cafe & Gifts, both located in Pace, are two businesses which recently completed the Change of Occupancy process.

Quick Links



- [DSC Home](#)
- [GoPermits](#)
- [GoCompliance](#)
- [Land Development Code](#)
- [Online Maps](#)
- [Subdivisions](#)

February 2012 Permit Reports

- [Commercial Permits](#)
- [Residential Permits](#)

Monthly reports of permitting activity in SRC. A searchable database is available online at GoPermits.

Join Our Mailing List!



Santa Rosa's Development Service Center was created to provide a collaborative and comprehensive approach to customer service. The DSC enables residents and property owners to accomplish all of their development related county business at one location, with the help of well trained and organized county employees.

How's our customer service? www.santarosa.fl.gov/customerservice/survey.html

How do I know if I need a Change of Occupancy permit?

The most important step is to contact the Development Services Center and schedule a Pre-Application Meeting or "pre-app." Each pre-app meeting is designed to help you determine all of the county permitting requirements for your enterprise. We bring together staff from the building, engineering, and zoning departments to talk with you about your plans and explain the permits and inspections that you will need. Our goal is not to simply answer your questions, but to answer those questions that you don't even know to ask.

How and where do I apply for a Change of Occupancy permit?

A Change of Occupancy Permit is a building permit. Either you or your contractor will submit two sets of building plans for review. Permit clerks are available to receive your plans and any required fees at the Development Services Center, Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., located in the Public Services Building at 6051 Old Bagdad Hwy. in Milton or at the South Service Center on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 5819 Gulf Breeze Pkwy. in Gulf Breeze. At the time of your submission you will be assigned a project number that will be used to track your permit.

What information must be shown on the plans?

Building plans for a Change of Occupancy Permit must be neatly drawn and to scale (graph paper may be acceptable in the case of simple buildings). The plans must show existing conditions as well as any proposed changes. Typical plans that would be required for a change of occupancy permit include:

1. A site plan
2. A floor plan
3. Plumbing/gas details
4. Electrical details
5. Mechanical details
6. Fire/life safety details
7. Stair details
8. A cross section

The plans required for your project will be identified during your pre-app meeting. Your contractor will be familiar with these plans and be of great assistance to you. In many cases, we will have information in our office from the original permitting of the building that will be also be helpful.

How long will it take to get my permit?

The amount of time required to obtain a change of occupancy varies, depending on the complexity of the project. A simple change of occupancy should go through the process within 10 days. However, in cases where special zoning approvals (conditional use or variance) are needed, a Change of Occupancy permit may take several weeks before approval is granted. Responding to our requests for information as quickly and comprehensively as possible is the best way you can help speed up the process.

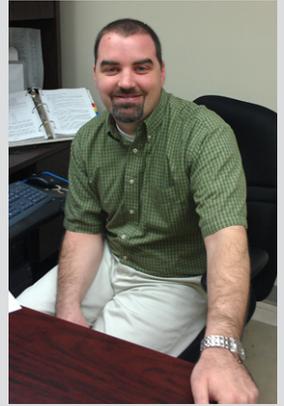
What happens once my permit and development order are issued?

Inspections are required for a Change of Occupancy permit just as for any other building permit. Either you or your contractor can arrange for an inspection by calling our office at (850) 981-7000, or, if you prefer, you may call our 24-hour request line at (850) 981-7050. Once the job has been inspected and approved by all appropriate inspectors and outside agencies, a new "Certificate of Occupancy" will be provided to you for your records.

Starting a business in an existing building may not be as simple as first thought, but it is still less expensive and less complicated than building a new facility from the ground up. We understand that starting a new business is a stressful event and that getting settled into a building is just one of the many things involved. We're ready to do our part by helping you through the permitting and inspections process.

County Planner Attends Med School

This month we say "farewell" to our commercial review planner, Josh Dault. During his time with Santa Rosa County, Josh has filled several positions, most notably as commercial review planner. Josh's skills go far beyond the knowledge needed for the job and include the ability to communicate, lead, and think strategically. Those skills will benefit him greatly in his new endeavors at the Florida State University College of Medicine.



Leslie Statler has been selected to replace Josh. Leslie has been with the county for seven years, providing excellent service to the Board of Adjustments, the Navarre Architectural Advisory Board and, more recently, the Zoning Board.



Contact Leslie Statler:

Phone: (850) 981-7086

Email: leslies@santarosa.fl.gov

Projects in the Pipeline

Recently Approved Development Orders

- Coldwater Creek Barn LLC, RV camp sites, 2442 Lawrence Cooley Rd., Milton

Recently Approved Certificates of Occupancy

- Reserve Point Townhomes, new six unit townhouse, 8858 Sanderling Ln., Navarre. Estimated cost of construction- \$356,400
- Walmart Express, interior remodel, 334 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze. Estimated cost of construction- \$2,478,637
- Aspen Dental, interior remodel, 4873 U.S. Hwy. 90, Pace. Estimated cost of construction- \$200,000
- First Apostolic Church, interior remodel and addition, 5574 Highway 90, Pace. Estimated cost of construction- \$3,124,376
- Gulf Winds Federal Credit Union, interior remodel, 1300 Shoreline Dr., Suite 200, Gulf Breeze. Estimated cost of construction- \$60,000
- Waffle House, interior remodel, 831 Gulf Breeze Pkwy., Gulf Breeze. Estimated cost of construction- \$36,965

It's a Go! In-House Software Increases Efficiency

The development permitting process in Florida can be complicated which is why the Development Services Center continues to develop ways to help customers through the permitting process. A recent key improvement has been the creation of GoPermits, a web-based permitting and project management program that improves communication and efficiency within the Development Services Center. Those improvements are then passed along to our customers in terms of time saved and frustration avoided.

The GoPermits software was developed in-house by the county's computer department. This software facilitated increased efficiency in many ways, including:

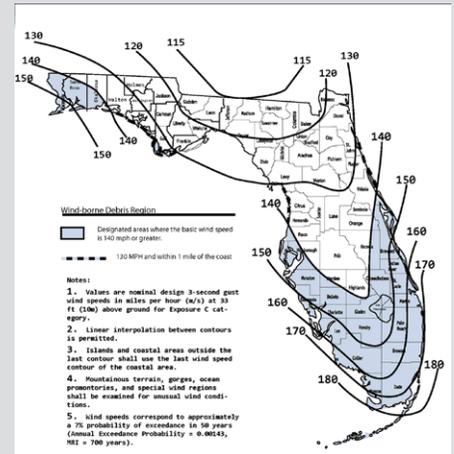
- Allowing inspectors to enter their own inspection notes which frees office personnel to perform other functions.
- Notifying GIS staff of any address or parcel number changes by email, ensuring that permit records and GIS data are in sync.
- Allowing receipts, permits, certificates of occupancy and power and gas releases to be emailed to the appropriate party, thereby reducing the amount of time and paper used and providing quicker service and reducing time spent by customers.
- Providing a contractor portal for access to each contractor's permitting records, providing real-time inspection data, automatic e-mail of inspection results, inspection scheduling and escrow balance information for contractors.
- Providing a citizen internet portal for access to permit and contractor data.
- Providing a staff plan review feature to track and manage projects in review which improves record keeping, reduced review times, improved tracking of review status and more efficient use of staff time.

In addition, another program – GoCompliance – was created to assist with management of code compliance cases. GoCompliance is a web-based code compliance management program that allows greater staff and citizen access to compliance records. In addition, staff has more ability to track and maintain compliance cases from complaint to resolution. The new software also brought forth the ability for citizens to submit a complaint form online anonymously, track active compliant cases and search current and past compliance case history. You can access the code compliance website and on-line form at www.santarosa.fl.gov/developmentservices/compliance.cfm.

The Development Services Center remains in "Go-mode", working with the computer department to create additional programs to manage and track commercial developments and zoning records. Look for future updates when these programs come online.

New Online Resource

One of the most significant changes to the 2010 Florida Building Code is the new state wind map and revised local risk maps. Due to improved science, wind speed lines have changed and the updated maps



are based on a new and more complete analysis of hurricane characteristics performed over the past 10 years. The new risk maps are available on the Development Services website at www.santarosa.fl.gov/developmentservices/windzone.cfm

The wind speed indicated for each wind speed line is different for the 2010 standard due to change in wind speed calculation philosophy. The new wind-borne debris regions (for opening protection) are areas within 1 mile of the coastal mean high water line where the ultimate design wind speed (Vult) is 130 or greater; or in areas where the ultimate design wind speed (Vult) is 140 or greater.



Santa Rosa County is revising the route and schedule for Santa Rosa Transit service, primarily along the U.S. Hwy. 90 corridor, to better meet the needs of our riders. Service will remain in the corridor with the possibility of minor extensions north and southward and elimination of service to the state correctional facilities in East Milton. Service is expected to be changed to express in the morning with the earliest service starting westbound from East Milton into Pensacola. Late afternoon/evening and evening service are also anticipated to be express. Express service will be made possible by eliminating lower utilized stops. Mid-day service will be non-express, similar to existing service. Days of service will remain Monday through Friday.

We would like to hear your thoughts on the proposed change. Comments regarding the change will be accepted through March 30, 2012 and may be sent by mail to Shawn Ward at Santa Rosa County Development Services, 6051 Old Bagdad Highway, Suite 202, Milton, Florida 32583, by FAX to (850) 983-9874 or by e-mail to shawnw@santarosa.fl.gov. Any questions may be directed to Ward at (850) 981-7082. Proposed changes may be viewed at www.santarosa.fl.gov/transit.