

**OCCUPANCY OF BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**DISCUSSION**

Sentence 2.2.10.2.(1) of Division C allows for an authority having jurisdiction to issue an occupancy permit for a building before construction is actually finished. This can occur in a number of situations:

- a multi-unit residential building built in phases; first phase sells out and is used to finance the next phase of construction,
- the office area of an industrial building is completed before the exterior finish and roofing materials are installed in the shop area,
- a wing of a hospital is built while the rest of the facility is still in use.

Sentence 8.1.1.1.(3) specifies that the fire safety at construction and demolition sites shall conform to the requirements in Section 5.6. of Division B of the Alberta Fire Code 2006, which in turn requires the development of a fire safety plan. This fire safety plan should be developed in consultation with and will be the responsibility of the local fire department and/or fire prevention personnel.

All building services, including those for fire safety, boilers and pressure vessels, elevators, gas, plumbing, and electrical, must be considered when determining the necessary provisions required to safeguard the occupants of a building. To assist, a checklist of standard provisions is provided below. The list covers normal items that would be expected to be complete, however, other provisions may also be necessary depending on the specific situation.

1. The fire safety plan required by Section 5.6. of Division B of the Alberta Fire Code 2006 and Sentence 8.1.1.1.(3) of the Alberta Building Code 2006 for buildings and portions of buildings under construction is to be adapted to include provisions for the occupants and the trades people to the satisfaction of the fire and building authority having jurisdiction.
2. The structure and enclosing walls of the building are complete up to and including the roof.
3. The walls enclosing the space to be occupied are complete.

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Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to Division B of the Alberta Building Code 2006.

Issue of this STANDATA is authorized by  
the Chief Building Administrator



*[Original Signed]*  
Ata R. Khan, MRAIC



**SAFETY CODES COUNCIL**

4. All guards for balconies are complete.
5. Stair shafts are complete for the full height of the building, including all doors between the stair shafts and adjacent floor areas.
6. The fire elevator in high rise buildings is operational for all storeys up to and including the one to be occupied.
7. All fire separations and closures are complete on all stories up to and including the storey to be occupied.
8. Exits and accesses to exit are complete including fire separations, doors, door hardware, self-closing devices, guards and handrails from the uppermost storey to be occupied down to the level from which occupants will exit the building (or the lowest level in the basement up to the exit level if the exit serves the basement). Means of access to the building may need to be enclosed to protect the building occupants from falling objects.
9. All aspects of barrier-free design outlined in Section 3.8. shall be completed for all areas intended to be occupied.
10. If service rooms are in operation, fire separations around the service rooms are complete and closures are installed.
11. All service shafts, including closures, are complete to the floor/ceiling assembly above the storey to be occupied and have a temporary fire separation at that assembly.
12. Water supply, drain, waste and vent systems are complete and operational for all storeys up to and including the one to be occupied. Vent systems should be completed. All unused openings in waste pipes must be effectively capped off.
13. Emergency power supply systems are installed, operational, connected to the equipment and appliances requiring emergency power supply and shall be maintained throughout the duration of construction. Lighting in corridors, exits and stairwells is complete for all storeys up to and including the one to be occupied.
14. Standpipe, sprinkler, fire alarm and detection systems are complete and operational for all storeys up to and including the one to be occupied and exterior connections for fire department use are installed and operational. Standpipe systems for firefighting on all unfinished floors are operational. Standpipe, sprinkler, fire alarm and detection systems shall be maintained throughout the duration of construction on all occupied floors.
15. Garbage rooms, chutes and ancillary services are complete and operational for all storeys to be occupied.
16. Firefighting access routes around the building are provided and accessible.
17. Floors, halls, corridors, lobbies and means of egress are free of construction materials and other hazards.

18. Outside stairways and walkways are complete to all exits and entrances.
19. Security items such as panic hardware and electromagnetic locks are installed at all exits and entrances.
20. Mechanical systems such as heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems serving occupied areas are complete and operational.
21. If smoke control measures are required by Code, the measures are complete and operational for all floors to be occupied, including floors designated as areas of refuge.
22. Measures are taken to prevent access by unauthorized persons to parts of the building and site that are incomplete.
23. Finishes in food establishments, dairy plants and abattoirs are complete.
24. Sanitary facilities are in place and functional.
25. Swimming pool circulating systems in the area to be occupied are complete and operational.

Boilers and Pressure Vessels, Electrical, Elevator, Fire, Gas, Plumbing and other authorities may expect to see a letter from the authority having jurisdiction stating that the preceding safeguards are adequate and have been satisfied before permitting the use of the building or the building services by other than the constructor or subcontractors for the project.

It should also be noted that Sentence 2.2.10.1.(2) of Division C states that the occupancy permit issued by the authority having jurisdiction does not operate as a license to carry on any intended business function within the building. It is the responsibility of the owner to obtain all necessary permits and licenses prior to commencing any commercial operations on the premises.

Notwithstanding any of the preceding, the authority having jurisdiction may accept alternate arrangements that, in their opinion, satisfy the safety requirements of the Alberta Building Code.

## CODE REFERENCES

1. Sentence 2.2.10.1.(2) of Division C states:

**2.2.10.1. Occupancy Permit**

...

**2)** An *occupancy permit* or permission to use a *building* issued under the Safety Codes Act shall not be construed to be a licence to operate or engage in any business.

2. Article 2.2.10.2. of Division C states:

**2.2.10.2. Occupancy before Completion**

**1)** The *authority having jurisdiction* may issue an *occupancy permit*, subject to

compliance with provisions to safeguard persons in or about the *project*, to allow the *occupancy* of a *building* before completion of the *project*.

**2)** The *owner* shall ensure that no *unsafe condition* exists or will exist because of construction or *work* being undertaken or not completed should *occupancy* occur before the completion of the construction or *work*.

3. Sentence 8.1.1.1.(3) states:

**8.1.1.1. Scope**

...

**3)** Fire safety at construction and demolition sites shall conform to Section 5.6. of Division B of the Alberta Fire Code 2006.