



CITY OF RACINE • BUILDING DIVISION • 730 WASHINGTON AVE • ROOM 304 • RACINE WI 53403
PHONE 262 636 9464 • FAX 262 636 9329 • www.cityofracine.org

Courtesy Inspections

A program to help businesses learn all the facts before they begin a project

- Learn what codes will apply
- Review the steps needed to begin planning and then construction
- Tips to keep your timetable on track
- Avoid errors that cause delays and costs
- Who to contact for inspections

Courtesy Inspection Program

When an existing building or space within a building is being considered for a future business, it is important that the interested party has as much information as possible before making a decision to enter into a purchase agreement or lease. The Courtesy Inspection Program was designed to reduce the amount of risk involved in re-using existing buildings by identifying major building code and zoning code issues that can result in costly upgrades and delays.

This Courtesy Inspection ordinance was designed to offer an inspection of a building or tenant space for the purpose of providing information about the existing building that may present an impediment to the proposed use of the building or space. Alarm systems, fire suppression systems, ADA accessibility, boilers, building structure, electrical systems, elevators, plumbing systems, deferred maintenance and well as zoning code limitations can all impact the time and expense business owners incur when opening a new business location. A courtesy inspection can provide the business owner with valuable information about a location before a commitment is entered to purchase or lease.

The Courtesy Inspection ordinance

Racine Code of Ordinances 18-XX. Commercial Building Courtesy Inspections. The Chief Building Inspector may make courtesy inspections of existing commercial buildings, as requested by the building owner or any other interested party with the consent of the property owner, to ascertain if the building structures or equipment would require alterations, modifications, additions, repairs or other updates before the building, or space within the building, could be legally occupied for a particular type of use. This program is not designed to identify every potential code violation and does not guarantee to the applicant the required permits from the various departments. The Chief Building Inspector may charge a fee for this inspection as provided in Sec. 18-95.

Commercial Courtesy inspection fees

The fee for a commercial building courtesy inspection is \$150.00.

Courtesy Inspection Process

- A business owner can apply for a Courtesy Inspection at the City of Racine Building Inspection office, 730 Washington Avenue, Room 304. Inspector's hours are 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM and 3:30 PM to 4:55 PM. Please allow 30 minutes to complete an application.
- Applicants will need to provide the following information to request a Courtesy Inspection: Address of the property including the unit number (if applicable). The proposed use of the space, i.e. what type of business or activity will be conducted within the building or space. It will be important to include all proposed uses. The building and zoning codes contain different and sometimes multiple requirements that are dependent upon the use. Applicants should be prepared to provide as much detail as possible to assure their Courtesy Inspection provides them enough information to make a sound business decision. Depending on the proposed use of the building or space a series of other questions will be asked. Here is an example of a few of the more commonly asked questions: How many people are expected to be in the business during regular business hours including employees and customers? What type of equipment will be used within the space? What type of materials or merchandise will be stored and/or sold?
- Staff will perform a zoning check. The use of buildings is regulated by the City's zoning code. The City is divided into many different districts and each district has a zoning designation. The zoning designation of the district in which your building resides will impact the type of uses that are allowed at that location. Staff will check to see if your proposed use is a permitted use, a conditional use or a prohibited use under the City's zoning code. There is a process to change a zoning designation. The applicant would have to apply for a rezoning of a parcel through the City Development Department.
- The building or tenant space is inspected by the Building, Electrical and Plumbing inspectors to determine what items need to be brought into compliance with the code for the proposed use. A Summary of Findings Report (SFR) will be provided which will provide an overview of the modifications, upgrades, and repairs that will be required before the building can be occupied. This information is not intended to identify every design detail or code requirement for the building or space.
- The prospective business owner can use the information from the Summary of Findings Report to make a purchase or lease decision.
- If the prospective business owner makes a decision to move forward with the selected location. It may be necessary to retain the services of a design professional to prepare detailed plans and specifications for the alterations needed to prepare the building or space for your business. Before a business can occupy a building or space, it will be necessary to obtain an occupancy permit, rezoning approval and any applicable license.

To schedule a Courtesy Inspection:

1. After application is made for the Courtesy Inspection, the Building Inspector office will arrange a date and time for the inspectors to visit the site with the owner or owner's representative. The general contact number for the Building Department is (262)636-9464. The building inspector's name and contact information will be listed on the Courtesy Inspection form. Inspectors are generally available by phone at 8:00 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. to 4:55 P.M.

2. Depending on the building, proposed use, size of building, building components, etc. multiple inspectors will be required to inspect the building or space to provide a complete overview. Each inspector will assess the building and an overall Summary of Findings Report (SFR) will be provided. The SFR will identify the major impediments you will need to address before occupancy of the building or space. The Courtesy Inspection is not intended to identify every detail or every code requirement. The intent is to identify significant deficiencies in the building or space (based on the applicant's proposed use) that will add a significant cost to their plan to occupy the space. It will still be necessary for the applicant to obtain the services of a professional to prepare plans and specifications for their project.

Key items of the Certificate of Occupancy process

A Certificate of Occupancy for a building or space must be obtained before the space can be occupied. Applications for a Certificate of Occupancy can be made at the Building Inspection office located at 730 Washington Avenue, Room 304, Racine, WI 53403 between the hours of 8:00 AM to 9:30 AM and 3:30 PM to 4:55 PM. The fee for the full Occupancy Permit is \$250.00.

An application for a Certificate of Occupancy will require inspections from multiple trade areas including construction, electrical, plumbing.

Remodeling, Alterations, Rehabilitation, or Additions

The building or space will require plans and permits if the business owner is planning to alter, rehabilitate, remodel, or add an addition. If the space is 50,000 cubic feet or greater, a licensed professional must prepare the plans. Applications for these permits are obtained at the Building Inspection office, 730 Washington Avenue, Room 304, Racine, WI 53403. Before any work can begin, plans must be submitted and permits obtained.



**DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT
BUILDING DIVISION**

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APPLICATION FOR COURTESY INSPECTION

PROPERTY ADDRESS _____

APPLICANT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE & EMAIL _____

PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE & EMAIL _____

INSPECTION FEE \$150.00

DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION _____

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE OF OWNER _____ DATE _____

If the perspective business owner makes a decision to move forward with the selected location. It may be necessary to retain the services of a design professional to prepare detailed plans and specifications for the alterations needed to prepare the building or space for your business. Before a business can occupy a building or space, it will be necessary to obtain an occupancy permit, rezoning approval and any applicable license.