

Place of Assembly

PA Applications



Photo: Samantha Modell

Place of Assembly

NYC Building Code + NYC Administrative Code

A Place of Assembly space is where large groups of people gather for any activity. The Department of Buildings requires a Place of Assembly Certificate of Operation in two circumstances: 1) where 75 or more people gather indoors or on roofs or roof terraces; or 2) where 200 or more people gather outdoors. Assembly spaces include but are not limited to restaurants, museums, theaters, auditoriums, churches and sports arenas.

NYC Building Code + NYC Administrative Code

The NYC Building Code (BC) and the NYC Administrative Code (AC) regulate assembly spaces. Among the safety issues they address: occupant load limits; exits and exit components; seating and furniture arrangements; fire alarms; sprinklers; and handicapped accessibility. Before legal operation, Places of Assembly must have a capacity sign and Certificate of Operation posted in a highly visible location within the space. Approved PA Plans should also be available at the site for yearly Fire Department inspection.

These notes outline the steps to apply for a Place of Assembly Certificate of Operation. However, these applications can only be approved after a space has been constructed (walls, doors, exits, etc.) pursuant to the required work permits, and must not exceed in occupant load the existing Certificate of Occupancy.

When the number of occupants is being changed for a proposed assembly space, a separate application to amend the number of occupants on the Certificate of Occupancy must also be filed.

Places of Assembly to serve more than 300 people must also file a Fire Protection Plan under a separate application with the Department of Buildings and the New York City Fire Department.

New York City Fire Code

The Fire Department performs fire safety inspections in conjunction with the Buildings Department for assembly spaces. The NYC Fire Code also outlines requirements for Public Gatherings (Temporary Places of Assembly) that regulate standing areas, egress, fire guards, safety announcements, inspections, evacuation protocol and fire apparatus access. For general guidelines governing minimum requirements for Temporary Places of Assembly, please refer to TPPN #7/96.

This publication is an overview of the requirements for this type of work. There may be additional, applicable Zoning Resolution, Construction Code, Multiple Dwelling Law or Energy Code requirements.

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BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

FIRST STEPS

Code Applicability

The PA application must conform to the Code which generated the latest Certificate of Occupancy (ie. Buildings filed under the 2014 Code must elect 2014 Code review. 1968 Code buildings must elect 1968 Code review) – except that a more recent Code may be elected *if* it is demonstrated to be equally or more safe as indicated by a full analysis demonstrating egress, fire construction, fire protection systems and height and area limitations per Administrative Code section [§28-101.4.4](#).

- PA1 review for proposed layout of Place of Assembly
- Lot diagram showing location of assembly space(s)
- Copy of C of O or schedule A from related Alt1 or NB application confirming number of occupants and zoning use group

ADMINISTRATIVE

DOB Forms

- PA1
- TR1 indicating *Public Assembly Emergency Lighting* (may be under NB or Alt 1)

Technical Documents

- Flame spread letter from manufacturer of certain products, describing the flammability of the product – BC [§801.1](#) & §27-348

Related Applications

- Alt1 or NB approved, indicating number of occupants, occupant loads and zoning use group
- Alt2 for construction work (walls, doors, etc.) if not already included in an Alt1 or NB
- Alt2 for Fire Protection Plan if over 300 occupants – BC [§28-109.2.3](#)
- New Certificate of Operation required for changes in zoning or assembly use group – BC [§28-117.1.2](#)
- Amendments to Certificate of Operation – BC [§28-117.1.3](#)

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BIS Required Items

- Check current Department Memos and Service Notices

ZONING

- N/A

MULTIPLE DWELLING LAW

- N/A

2014 BUILDING CODE

General

- Not located within 250' of any occupancy containing explosive contents – BC §[1028.1](#)
- Location and design of posted capacity sign indicated – BC §[1028.1.2](#)
- Means of egress illumination – BC §[1006](#)
- Exit signs – BC §[1011](#)

Egress

- Main exit provided for assembly space greater than 300 persons – BC §[1028.2](#)
- A-1 foyer and lobby waiting areas do not encroach on egress path – BC §[1028.4](#)
- Interior balcony or gallery for greater than 50 persons is provided with two means of egress – BC §[1028.5](#)
- Vertical stair enclosures provided for vertical openings – BC §[1028.5.1](#)
- Width of means of egress calculations provided – BC §[1028.6](#)
- Travel distances, primary and secondary – Table [1028.7](#)
- Common path of travel does not exceed 30' – BC §[1028.8](#)
- Signage– BC §[1030](#)

Spaces with Occupant Load Less than 12 Square Feet per Person

- Classes of exits and distribution identified – BC §[1028.17.1](#) & §[1028.17.2](#)
- Safe area requirements – BC §[1028.17.3](#)

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- Open exterior space requirements – BC §[1028.17.4](#)

Seating

- Aisle widths – BC §[1028.9.2](#)
- Aisle terminations – BC §[1028.9.5](#)
- Clear width of Aisle access ways serving seating – BC §[1028.10](#)
- Aisle walking surfaces (*stairs, ramps, marking stripes, step lighting, aisle illumination*) – BC §[1028.11](#)
- Seating Stability – BC §[1028.12](#)
- Handrails at aisle ramps and aisle stairs – BC §[1028.13](#)
- Assembly Guards (ie. cross aisles) – BC §[1028.14](#)
- Bench seating requirements – BC §[1028.15](#)
- Standee area requirements – BC §[1028.16](#)
- Enclosed sidewalk cafés included as part of assembly space – BC §[3111.7](#)

Fire Protection Systems

- Required sprinkler system triggers based on fire area, occupant load and specific uses – BC §[903.2.1](#)
- Required fire alarm system with emergency power source, triggers based on occupant load 300 persons or more or where used as a cabaret – BC §[907.2.1](#)

Accessibility – BC §1108.2

- Wheelchair seating and viewing positions provided – BC §[1108.2.2](#)
- Wheelchair companion seating provided – BC §[1108.2.3](#)
- Designated accessible aisle seats provided – BC §[1108.2.5](#)
- Dining areas 100% accessible – BC §[1108.2.9](#)

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1968 BUILDING CODE

General

- Optional use of 1968 Building Code for prior code buildings with exceptions to conform with 2014 Building Code – AC §[28-101.4.3](#), Exceptions 1 through 19
- Not located within 250' of any occupancy containing explosive contents – AC §27-526
- Location and design of posted capacity sign indicated – AC §27-527

Egress

- Number of persons per unit of width, required widths of exit components – Table 8-1
- Aisle and cross aisle widths – AC §27-532
- Travel distances (primary, secondary), distance between exits, changes of direction – AC §27-533, Table 8-1
- Exit opening widths, exit class (1,2,3) and distribution – AC §27-534
- Safe area requirements – AC §27-535
- Corridors and exit passageways – AC §27-536, 537
- Vertical exits – AC §27-538
- Open exterior space requirements – AC §27-539
- Exit lighting – AC §27-540
- Exit signs – AC §27-541
- Emergency lighting – AC §27-542

Seating

- Movable and fixed chair seating – AC §27-531.a.1
- Bleacher seating – AC §27-531.a.2
- Platform seating – AC §27-531.a.3
- Bench seating – AC §27-531.a.4
- Table and chair seating – AC §27-531.a.5
- Counter seating – AC §27-531.a.6
- Standee areas – AC §27-531.a.7
- Protective guards – AC §27-531.a.8

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Fire Protection Systems (2014 Building Code)

- Special provisions for additions, alterations or repairs in prior code buildings and conformance with 2014 Building Code requirements – BC [§901.9](#)
- Change in occupancy or use of building or space – BC [§901.9.2](#)
- Value of alteration compared to existing building – BC [§901.9.4](#)

Accessibility (2014 Building Code)

- Special provisions for alterations and change of use or occupancy in prior code buildings and conformance with 2014 Building Code requirements – BC [§1101.3](#)

2014 FIRE CODE

- Seating plan for FDNY approval – FC §407.4

2014 ENERGY CODE

- Interior lighting power requirements – ECC C405.5.2

APPLICABLE BULLETINS, DIRECTIVES, PPNS, MEMOS

- [Directive 5/79](#) (emergency lighting)
- [Directive 7/79](#) (emergency lighting & fire protection systems for assembly spaces)
- [TPPN #7/96](#) (Temporary Places of Assembly)

OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

Fire Department

- Seating plan prior to occupancy
- Annual PA permit and inspection