

Occupant Load Information

With areas in our state starting to reopen, we have received a lot of questions about occupancy & occupant loads. The information below should provide some clarification on these topics.

There are two factors to consider when setting a maximum occupant load:

1) Available exits and 2) Available floor/seating space

Rule of thumb for exits: a door that is three feet wide will accommodate 170 people. If the occupant load exceeds the available exiting, occupancy is limited to the available exiting.

Occupant load for specific types of buildings is determined by measuring the gross square feet of areas occupied by the public. Does not include employee work areas, storage areas or restrooms.

Mercantile (Retail stores, convenience stores):

30 square feet per person, gross floor area occupied by the public.

Assembly (restaurants, bars, churches, gyms, theaters):

7 square feet per person, gross floor area for spaces used for standing, dance floors and rows of chairs

15 square feet per person for spaces used with tables and chairs -Pews, booths and bleacher seating

18 inches of seating surface per person

Spaces used for exercise:

15 square feet per person for spaces without equipment

50 square feet per person for spaces with equipment

Combination spaces (example: convenience store with a restaurant):

30 square feet per person in sales area and assembly seating as specified above.

For more information/clarification, please watch the video below from NFPA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbiVenRL5JQ>