



GENERAL ORDER

GENERAL ORDER 610.09

Occupancy Load Posting

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL

Issue Date: October 05, 2005

Revision Date: January 11, 2018

1 APPLICABILITY

2 All Personnel

3 POLICY

4 This General Order is in accordance with the Howard County Code, Section 17.104: Howard
5 County Fire Prevention Code. This policy establishes the procedures for determining occupancy
6 loads in places of assembly.

7 DEFINITIONS

8 ➤ None

9 PROCEDURES

10 GENERAL:

11 The maximum number of occupants permitted in an assembly shall be determined by the
12 edition of NFPA 101, *The Life Safety Code*, referenced in the Howard County Fire Prevention
13 Code.

- 14 • Signs shall be posted in new and existing places of assembly (Attachment A).
- 15 • It shall be the owner's responsibility to install and maintain the signs.
- 16 • A copy of the certificate shall be kept on file with the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM).
 - 17 ○ This copy may be electronic or paper.

19 PROCEDURE FOR COMPLETING THE OCCUPANCY LOAD:

20 The Bureau Chief of OFM shall designate a member of the OFM as the Occupant Load
21 Coordinator, for the purpose of completing occupancy load calculations.

22 The Occupant Load Coordinator shall:

- 24 • Complete a site visit.
- 25 • Create a drawing of the facility. A drawing provided by the occupant may be used
26 provided it is up to date and accurate. The drawing shall show the following:
 - 27 ○ Name and address of the facility.



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- 28 ○ All necessary measurements and means of exit including stairs, ramps, etc.
- 29 needed to complete the occupancy load.
- 30 ○ The date of completion of the drawing.
- 31 ○ The scale of the drawing. Drawings not to scale shall be noted "NTS" next to the
- 32 date.
- 33 ○ The existing table and/or chair alignment.
- 34 ○ An arrow designating North.
- 35
- 36 ● Complete the Public Assembly Occupant Load worksheet(s) (Attachment B) for each
- 37 occupancy load calculated.
- 38 ● Complete the occupancy sign with the applicable load calculations.
- 39 ○ The term "Chairs" shall be used on the occupancy sign to define concentrated
- 40 use, without fixed seating.
- 41 ○ The term "Tables and Chairs" shall be used on the occupancy sign to define less
- 42 concentrated use, without fixed seating.
- 43
- 44 ● Make the appropriate address changes to the occupancy sign cover sheet (Attachment
- 45 C).
- 46 ● Submit the drawing, all Public Assembly Occupant Load worksheet(s), and the
- 47 occupancy sign along with the occupancy sign cover sheet to the Bureau Chief for
- 48 review.
- 49 ○ If unacceptable, the Bureau Chief shall return all the documents to the Occupant
- 50 Load Coordinator noting all deficiencies and corrections needed. After all
- 51 corrections are made, all the documents shall be resubmitted to the Bureau
- 52 Chief.
- 53 ○ If acceptable, the Bureau Chief shall sign the Public Assembly Occupant Load
- 54 worksheet(s) and return all documents to the Occupant Load Coordinator for
- 55 filing and distribution.
- 56

57 The Bureau Chief of OFM, or his designee, shall be responsible for signing and dating the
58 original occupancy sign and the associated cover sheet.

59
60 A signed copy of the occupancy sign and the occupancy sign cover sheet shall be placed in the
61 OFM street address, and/or the electronic inspections database file, along with the drawing and
62 all Public Assembly Occupant Load worksheets.

63
64 The original occupancy sign and occupancy sign cover sheet shall be delivered to the
65 appropriate contact of the facility. The occupancy sign cover sheet shall be explained as
66 needed.

67 REFERENCES

- 68 ● Current Version of the Howard County Fire Prevention Code



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69 **SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES**

70 Updated format
71 Reflects new titles and workflow

72 **FORMS/ATTACHMENTS**

- 73 • Attachment A: Occupancy Sign
- 74 • Attachment B: Public Assembly Occupant Load Worksheet
- 75 • Attachment C: Occupancy Letter to Occupant

76 **APPROVED**

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John S. Butler, Fire Chief
Office of the Fire Chief

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Attachment A
Name and Address of Occupancy



MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY

XXX

**THE ABOVE NUMBER INCLUDES
EMPLOYEES/STAFF**

**BY ORDER, OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL
HO. CO. FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**



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Attachment B Public Assembly Occupant Loads

Based on NFPA 101 2003 edition

Business Name: _____ Inspector: _____ Date: _____
 Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____
 Telephone: _____ Use type _____ Protected Yes ___ No ___

A Total no. of Exits	B Distance between exits (feet)	C Diagonal length of room (feet)	D Width of exit (inches)
			Main a
			B
			C
			d

E Description (ie pool table, bar, restaurant, etc.)	F Net Ft ²	G Max travel distance to exit (feet)	H Current seating capacity
a	a		
b	b		
c	c		
d	d		

Number of Exits (5)	
Design Occupant Load	Min. required exits
50 or less	1 exit
600 or less	2 exits
601-999	3 exits
1,000+	4 exits

Exit Remoteness (7)	
Protected	Unprotected
1/2 Diagonal of room	1/3 Diagonal of room
Max. travel distance (13)	
Protected	Unprotected
250 ft	150 ft

Occupant Load Factors (1-4)	
Chairs	7 ft
Tables/Chairs	15 ft
Waiting spaces	3 ft
Kitchens	100 ft
Gaming areas	11 ft
Bench seating	1 person/18"

1. _____ Divided by _____ = _____
No. from F(a) From E(a) and load chart +
2. _____ Divided by _____ = _____
No. from F(b) From E(b) and load chart +
3. _____ Divided by _____ = _____
No. from F(c) From E(c) and load chart +
4. _____ Divided by _____ = _____
No. from F(d) From E(d) and load chart =
5. Total occupant capacity (lines 1-4) _____
6. Is there an adequate number of exits (A) to handle result from No. 5 (see number of exits chart)

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is C divided by factor from exit remoteness chart less than B?
(apply only if No. 5 > 50)

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Divide _____ by .2 = _____
No. MAIN from D(a) +
9. Divide _____ by .2 = _____
No. from D(b) +
10. Divide _____ by .2 = _____
No. from D(c) +
11. Divide _____ by .2 = _____
No. from D(d) =
12. Total exit capacity _____
13. Is corresponding number in max travel distance chart greater than all values in G?

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Is the MAIN exit (No. 8) capable of handling 50% of number 5?

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Are all the means of egress components (stairs, aisle) capable of accommodating occupant load?

Y	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. **POSTED OCCUPANCY** is the lower value of worksheet items 5 and 12. _____
17. Reviewed By: _____ Date: _____



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Attachment C



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 400, Columbia, Maryland 21046
410-313-6000

JOHN S. BUTLER, FIRE CHIEF • ALLAN H. KITTLEMAN, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

January 6, 2017

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Howard County Fire Code requires all occupancies that are classified as "Public Assembly" to be posted with a sign designating the occupancy capacity. This sign is provided by the Office of the Fire Marshal as required by the Howard County Fire Code, Title 17 Section 17.104.

The sign shall be permanently affixed to the interior wall of the structure within 5 lateral feet of the main entrance, at a height of 5-10 feet. The sign shall not be easily removed by patrons or employees. The sign shall be permanently affixed to the wall.

Failure to display the sign may result in the issuance of a citation resulting in a \$1,000 fine. As dictated in the Howard County Fire Code Section 20.1, subsection 20.1.5.10.4.1.

You are required to maintain an accurate count of occupants in the building at all times. Two tally counters shall be used to accomplish this task. One tally counter is used to count the people entering the building and one to count the people leaving the building. The difference between the two is the current occupancy of the facility. In the event that this method is not in use during an occupancy inspection and the inspector has reason to believe that the facility may be above the maximum occupancy, the inspector can order the facility to be evacuated to the outside and then count the occupants as they re-enter.

If your occupancy sign is damaged, stolen, or unreadable, please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal to obtain a replacement.

If you make alterations to the interior of the building or alter the seating configuration please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal to have your facility re-evaluated for compliance with the fire code.

Please review and comply with the attached occupancy posting guidelines that are in effect specifically for *[list address and room capacities]*. Please contact the Office of the Fire Marshal at 410-313-6040 if you have any questions.

Your partner in safety,

Gordon E. Wallace
Assistant Chief
Office of the Fire Marshal