

Calculating Occupancy Requirements

CMOH Order 42

Retail businesses and places of worship can be open with restricted capacity

Most retail businesses and places of worship may remain open with capacity limited to 15% of the occupancy set under the Fire Code, with a minimum of 5 customers/attendees allowed. The restricted capacity only applies to customers/attendees and not workers or faith leadership.

Note: babies in carriers are not included in the capacity limits.

Occupant load

The occupant load is the maximum number of persons allowed within a building or a suite within a building.

Occupancy under the Fire Code

All businesses and places of worship with a physical location in Alberta have an occupant load as a requirement of the provincial building and fire codes.

Finding occupant load

Your building or suite within a building may have an occupant load number posted near the main entrance.

If your building or suite within a building has been recently built or renovated, the building permit documentation will likely contain your occupant load number.

A fire safety codes officer may also have completed an updated occupant load calculation for your business.

Building permit documentation

Your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction (building department) may have information regarding your building permit documentation.

If you don't know how to reach your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction, you can access their contact information via the dropdown list in the following link:

<https://www.safetycodes.ab.ca/permits-inspections/where-to-get-a-permit/>

Tips for Setting and Observing Capacity Limits Malls and other Large Indoor Retail Locations

Alberta's [Guidance for Malls and Shopping Centres](#) sets out basic safety measures. For the holiday shopping season, the following are of particular importance:

- Explore ways to remind shoppers of the restrictions and expectations such as through signage, video and audio announcements and through the use of apps.
- Consider having more staff deployed to enforce restrictions.
- Establish and encourage the use of one-directional pathways.
- Post distancing stickers throughout the premise where lines occur to clearly mark out the required distances between shoppers.
- Have a traffic counter systems in place to maintain a real time capacity count and ensure measures are taken at entry points to ensure the number of patrons remains below the current capacity limit.
- Consider limiting access to some entrances to better track the number of entrants.
- Encourage and promote curbside pick-ups and use of virtual queuing and wait time notification apps.
- Extend shopping hours and encourage shoppers to come at non-peak times.
- When setting up attractions that could draw larger numbers of people (e.g. holiday displays, seating areas, popular seasonal services) ensure there is enough space around those attractions to prevent crowding and bottlenecks.

We recommend relaying the following key messages to shoppers:

- Masking and physical distancing is required by law. Indoor and outdoor social gatherings are not permitted. Non-compliance may result in a fine of \$1,000 per offense.
- Shoppers are encouraged to visit the mall at non-peak hours, to limit their time spent on the premise, and to utilize curbside pick-up, delivery and online services as available so that physical distancing can be maintained at all times.
- Shoppers who are not feeling well are required by law to stay at home.