

CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Marshal Division

Information Bulletin

Occupant Capacity Signs



Every room or space that is an Assembly occupancy shall have the occupant load of the room or space posted in a conspicuous place, near the main exit or exit access doorway from the room or space. Posted signs shall be of an approved legible permanent design and shall be maintained by the owner or authorized agent (IFC 2015, 1004.3). For Flexible Use Places of Assembly, each proposed use shall have a floor plan prepared for review and an Occupant Load determined

Signs shall be made of a permanent, rigid material and securely fastened to the wall near the main entry or adjacent to the main entry of a space or room designated as an Assembly. Paper signs shall be framed and maintained behind glass/plexiglass and permanently fastened to the wall. Signs must be on a contrasting background so they are highly visible and may not be concealed from public view.

The following text must be provided on each sign.

- Line 1 – ½” tall letters (minimum): “Maximum”
- Line 2 – ½” tall letters (minimum): “Occupancy”
- Line 2 – ½” tall letters (minimum) : “Not to Exceed”
- Line 3 – 1” tall letters (minimum): [Approved Load]
- Line 4 – ½” tall letters (minimum): “Persons”



Approved occupant loads are typically developed during the initial construction or renovation phase of the project and should be provided by the Design Professional for the project. These figures will be reviewed and approved by City staff. Existing facilities that do not have verifiable records of an approved occupant load will be reviewed by members of the Building Inspection Division and the Fire Marshal Division. Staff may develop occupant loads that must be reviewed by the Building Official and Fire Official or a licensed Design Professional may be required. Flexible Use Places of Assembly with Occupant Loads predetermined shall have each Occupant Load posted with an 8-1/2” x 11” diagram showing the layout for Occupant Load.

Please contact the City of Charleston Fire Department – Fire Marshal Division at (843)724-3429 with any questions or for additional information.