

Changes In Building Occupancies

Buildings are constructed with unique code requirements based on their proposed use. Hospitals, residences, schools, day care facilities, mercantile buildings and other occupancies have different requirements for structural adequacy, exits, fire alarm systems, stair construction, floor construction, door hardware, and many other building components.

The City of De Soto has adopted the 2006 International Building Code (IBC), and Section 3406 - Change in Occupancy, establishes the regulations for changing the occupancy classification of a building (see Sections 303 through 312 of the IBC for descriptions of different occupancies). Section 3406 requires that no change in use be made unless the building is made to comply with all the requirements of the building code, and that a new Certificate of Occupancy be obtained from the City of De Soto, Building Inspection Department for the building.

The evaluation of a building's compliance with code requirements is a lengthy and complex project. The City of De Soto may require that parties interested in changing the occupancy classification of a building hire a Kansas registered architect to evaluate the building for code compliance. The American Institute of Architects has an internet site (<http://www.aia.org>, select "Architect Search") that may help in finding a qualified architect for this purpose.

A written report of compliance for the proposed occupancy, prepared by the architect, must be submitted to the Building Inspection Department prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy. The architect should also prepare any plans, showing required remedial work, where needed. A building permit may be necessary to complete the remedial work. Contact Building Inspection Department at 913.583.1182 E130, should you have any questions.