



# Determining Occupant Load / Capacity

May 2020

Under Governor Inslee's Phase 2 re-opening plan, certain businesses can re-open but at reduced capacity. For businesses with a posted occupant load, or a certificate of occupancy that stipulates occupant load, that should be used as the basis to determine the reduced capacity per the order. But many businesses do not have a posted occupant load and are trying to determine what their occupant load is in order to comply with the reduced capacity requirements of the Governor's plan.

If you have access to the permit or design plan documents for your business, the front page of the documents typically contains occupant load calculations often prepared by a registered architect.

If you do not have access to the permit or design documents, the following may help you determine the occupant load.

In areas without fixed seats, the occupant load is determined based on the use of the space.

## **Restaurants:**

Areas with tables and chairs: 15 s.f./person

*Example:* Restaurant area of 3,000 s.f (does not include kitchen and other "back of house" functions):  $3,000 / 15 = 200$  persons. Note: a "Maximum Occupant Load" sign should be present in this example.

## **Phase 2 Re-Opening:**

[https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Phase2020Restaurant%20industry%20re-open%20proposal\\_FINAL.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Phase2020Restaurant%20industry%20re-open%20proposal_FINAL.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Maximum 50% Capacity – no bar seating. In this example, the maximum capacity would be further limited to 100 persons.

## **Retail:**

Not including malls: 60 s.f./person

*Example:* Store area of 1,500 s.f. (does not include storeroom and other "back of house" functions):  $1,500 / 60 = 25$  persons.

## **Phase 2 Re-Opening:**

<https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Phase2InStoreRetailGuidance.pdf>

Maximum 30% capacity. In this example, the maximum occupancy would be 7 in addition to the employees. The Governor's plan requires that the reduced occupant load is posted conspicuously at the store entrance.

Building and Fire Codes are used to determine the occupant load (capacity) of buildings and spaces. The determination is used to ensure that there are enough exits, that they are properly separated, and of sufficient width so that in an emergency occupants can safely evacuate. The reduced occupant load required by the Governor's Phase 2 re-opening reduces the normally allowable occupant load to help maintain proper social distancing.

Additional help? An online occupant load estimator is available at this site:

<https://www.fireinspection360.com/occupantload>

You can also contact the Longview Fire Department at [lfid@mylongview.com](mailto:lfid@mylongview.com) or (360) 442-5503 for additional assistance.