



# GUIDELINES FOR Capacity Placards

## FUNDAMENTALS

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The District of Columbia Construction Code requires all assembled occupancies shall have the occupancy load of the room or space posted in a conspicuous place near the main exit or exit access doorway. (Please refer to the relevant section of the building code below.) This brochure describes the process of formal approval of capacity placards, either to bring existing premises into compliance, or to obtain capacity placards for new or newly renovated spaces.

## REQUIREMENTS

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Documents required for a capacity placard:

- Complete our online permit application. You can access it by visiting:
  - <http://cpms.dkra.dc.gov/OCPI/PermitMenu.aspx>
- Architectural egress plans
- Placard drawings



Publications, forms and other useful information can be found online at:

[www.dkra.dc.gov](http://www.dkra.dc.gov)



Find DCRA: 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Washington DC 20024

Permit Operations Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Homeowner Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, (202) 442-9517  
Building Plan Review, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, (202) 442-8959  
Office of the Surveyor, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, (202) 442-4984  
Office of the Zoning Administrator, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, (202) 442-4576  
Inspection, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, (202) 442-9557  
Office of the Director, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, (202) 442-4400

### Hours of Operation

Mon, Tues, Wed + Friday: 8:30 am — 3:30 pm  
Thursday: 9:30 am — 3:30 pm

*This document is available in alternative formats and languages.  
Please call (202) 442-4601, TTY (202) 123-4567 for more information.*

## HOW TO OBTAIN A CAPACITY PLACARD APPROVAL

Approval of one or more capacity placards for new/existing spaces in the same building (same address), can be obtained through approval of a Capacity Placard Permit. Placards for new or newly renovated spaces can also be approved within the scope of the respective building permit (at no additional cost) if all information, as specified in this brochure, is provided with the building permit application.

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Filing for a capacity placard permit requires submission of the following documents:

### **APPLICATION**

Using form BLRA-33, complete boxes 1 through 18, and complete and sign Section "(1), Applicant's Signature" of the form

1. In box 11, check "Other" and specify "Capacity Placard"
2. In box 12, write "Capacity placard(s) for", followed by the identification of the room(s) (room number or room name) for which capacity placard approval is being sought

### **ARCHITECTURAL EGRESS PLANS**

Provide 4 sets of plans drawn to a scale of at least 1/8 inch to a foot and shall contain the following information:

1. Room(s) dimensions
2. Seating arrangement(s)/diagram(s)
3. Egress plan showing the location and width of aisles, corridors and exits
4. Location of existing fire protective signaling systems
5. Location of existing emergency lighting and exit signs
6. Occupant load capacity applied for (room by room)
7. Date of construction or of substantial renovation of the premises, or of the most recent tenant layout renovation, if known
8. Existing toilet facilities serving the space

## PLACARD DRAWINGS

Submit four (4) sets of placards fully dimensioned and drawn to scale of at least half (scale of 1:2). Full size (scale 1:1) drawings are preferable. Placards should be designed as close as possible to the standard format shown below:

1. Minimum placard dimensions: 8" high by 10" wide
2. 1<sup>st</sup> line: Words MAXIMUM SEATING CAPACITY, in characters at least 3/8 of an inch high.
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> line: The numeral for the approved capacity, in Arabic numbers at least 2" high and stroke width between 1/8 and 1/4 of their height
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> line: Words MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE CAPACITY, in characters at least 3/8 of an inch high
5. 4<sup>th</sup> line: The numeral of the approved capacity, in Arabic numbers at least 2" high and stroke width between 1/8 and 1-4 of their height
6. 5<sup>th</sup> line: Indicate the type of business in characters at least 3/16 of an inch high
7. 6<sup>th</sup> line: Indicates the type of floor arrangement, in characters at least 3/16 of an inch high; use the words CHAIRS ONLY for rows of movable chairs (concentrated); the words TABLES AND CHAIRS for table seating (non-concentrated); the words FIXED SEATS for fixed seating
8. Next block of lines: Word LOCATION followed by identification (number or name) of the room and the floor, in characters at least 3/16 of an inch high
9. Last block of lines: The identification of the building, including its street address, in characters at least 3/16 of an inch high

## RELATED CODE SECTIONS

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### 1004.2 INCREASED OCCUPANT LOAD

The occupant load permitted in any building, or portion thereof, is permitted to be increased from that number established for the occupancies in Table 1004.1.1, provided that all other requirements of the code are also met based on such modified numbers and the occupant load does not exceed one occupant per 7 square feet (0.65 m<sup>2</sup>) of occupied floor space. Where required by the building official, an approved aisle, seating or fixed equipment diagram substantiating any increase in occupant load shall be submitted. Where required by the building official, such diagram shall be posted.

Note: All maximum capacities are computed pursuant to the  
**International Building Code (IBC) Section 1004**  
and all affected systems shall be designed to the computed capacity.

### **1004.3 POSTING OF OCCUPANCY LOAD**

Every room or space that is an assembled 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.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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### **1. What to Post?**

**Answer:** The actual placard(s) shall be made of a material that will ensure durability (not of paper). Placard(s) shall replicate accurately the approved drawings in overall dimensions, copy of graphic layout, and font sizes.

### **2. How to Post?**

**Answer:** The placard(s) shall be securely fastened to the structure, in a conspicuous place near the main exit from the room(s). Room(s) with more than one approved layout and capacity shall be posted for each such arrangement and approved capacity.

### **3. How Much Does It Cost?**

**Answer:** The permit fee is assessed based on the approved hourly fee schedule for review of plans. No additional fee required if processed in conjunction with the building permit to build or alter the space.

### **10. How Long Does It Take?**

**Answer:** If the submittal is complete, the application review process can be completed within 14 business days.