

Small Business is Big Business in Lakewood

Tips on securing your Certificate of Occupancy



CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION TO OPEN A BUSINESS IN LAKEWOOD!

This information outlines procedures related to securing the Certificate of Occupancy required by all businesses before opening in Lakewood. These guidelines are general in nature. Details on topics noted in *italics* can be found on the City of Lakewood website: onelakewood.com.

THREE THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU SIGN A LEASE OR OPEN A NEW BUSINESS:

- 1 Contact the Lakewood Planning & Development office (216.529.6634)** to confirm that property zoning allows for the business you want in the space you have chosen. Handouts, checklists, zoning details, and other resources, including lists of available sites, can be downloaded from the City website: onelakewood.com/development.

Variances to the zoning code must be appealed to the *Board of Zoning Appeals* and/or the *Planning Commission*. Our Planning & Development Department can guide you through this process as necessary.

- 2 Call the Lakewood Building Department (216.529.6270)** as soon as you have identified a space for your business to discuss its status in relation to the Ohio Building Code.

The following issues will be reviewed regardless of permitted use to confirm compliance with the building code (specific uses will require additional reporting):

- **Safety:** Layout (fire egress), floor loads, exits, stairs and elevators.
- **Accessibility:** Building entrance, route from entry to primary function, signage and parking.

3 Contact the Lakewood Fire Marshall (216.529.6660).

Your space will be inspected by the Lakewood Fire Marshall to assure compliance with fire codes including sprinklers, alarms, smoke detectors and fire separation.



BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY INTERIOR OR EXTERIOR PHYSICAL CHANGES TO YOUR SPACE:

Work with *Building Department* and *Planning & Development Department* personnel in advance to review the process for building plan applications, approvals, permits and inspections.

Lakewood's *Architecture Board of Review (ABR)* must approve any changes to the exterior of the building, including awnings, lighting, windows and doors.

New signage requires a **sign plan** submitted to the Building Department and approved by the *Board of Signage Review*. Permits are required to construct, repair or change a sign.

The Planning Commission, Architectural Board of Review and the Board of Signage Review meet monthly and **applications must be received at least two weeks in advance**. Failure to meet application deadlines may delay your project, so be sure to check the deadline and meeting dates posted online.

Over communicate. Take a team approach. Introduce your colleagues (architect, designer, contractor) to City representatives and encourage them to talk early and often about your plans. This approach will save both time and money, expedite receipt of your Certificate of Occupancy and launch your small business towards doing big business in Lakewood, Ohio!

City of Lakewood Department of Planning and Development

216.529.6630

planning@lakewoodoh.net

Coordinates the zoning, economic development and long-range planning for the City.

Division of Building

Housing.building@lakewoodoh.net

216.529.6270

Inspects and permits alterations, repairs, new construction, and manages contractor registration and licensing. All applications for the Board of Zoning Appeals, Sign Review Board and Architectural Review Board are submitted to the Building Department.

Lakewood Chamber of Commerce

216.226.2800

lakewoodchamber.org

Local business owners are willing to offer free counsel and support. We urge you to take advantage of this peer resource.

LakewoodAlive

216.521.0655

lakewoodalive.com

The community's nonprofit 501-c (3) economic development organization, LakewoodAlive directs the Main Street™ "Downtown Lakewood" revitalization effort and offers business technical assistance to any Lakewood business.



lakewoodalive