



Guidance for Determining Occupant Load/Capacity

6-9-2020

Under Governor Inslee's adjusted Phase 1 (King County) and Phase 2 (Snohomish County) Re-opening plan, certain businesses can re-open but at reduced occupant load capacity.

Guidance below will assist City of Bothell restaurant and retail store owners in determining their social distancing occupant load but businesses with a posted occupant load, or those with a certificate of occupancy, should use this number as a basis to determine the reduced capacity per the order. If you have access to the permit or design plan documents for your business, the front page of the documents typically contain the maximum occupant load calculations and often are prepared by a registered architect. Restaurant and mercantile businesses that do not have a posted occupant load, a certificate of occupancy or access to plans should use the guidance below.

In areas without fixed seating, the occupant load is determined based on the use of the space. Please see below, based on the county where your business is located:

Restaurants: 15 s.f./person (Areas with movable tables and chairs):

Example: Restaurant area of 1,500 s.f. (Main dining area only. This does not include area for kitchens and other back of house functions): $1,500/15 = 100$ persons.

[Phase 1 adjusted \(King County\):](#) Maximum 25% Capacity (outdoor capacity is 50%) – In this example, the maximum capacity would be limited to 25 persons (50 persons for outdoor seating).

[Phase 2 \(Snohomish County\):](#) Maximum 50% Capacity (indoor and outdoor) – In this example, the maximum capacity would be limited to 50 persons.

Retail (not including malls): 60 s.f./person

Example: Store area of 3,000 s.f. (does not include storeroom and other employee only functions): $3,000/60 = 50$ persons

[Phase 1 adjusted \(King County\):](#) Maximum 15% Capacity. In this example, the maximum occupancy would be 7.5 in addition to the employees. The Governor's plan requires that the reduced occupant load is posted conspicuously at the store entrance.

[Phase 2 \(Snohomish County\):](#) Maximum 30% Capacity. In this example, the maximum occupancy would be 15 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 maximum allowed occupant load (capacity) of buildings and spaces for the purposes of life safety. This occupant load is then used to ensure that there are enough exits, they are properly separated, and of sufficient width so that, in an emergency, occupants can quickly and safely exit the building.

The occupant load allowed by the Governor's Phase 1 adjusted and Phase 2 Safe Start plan reduces the normal allowable occupant load to help maintain proper social distancing and, while we may be providing this guidance, please use the following link for any questions on regulations and enforcement related to the Governor's Safe Start plan - <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/how-you-can-help/covid-19-business-and-worker-inquiries>

Additional Help needed? An online occupant load estimator is available at this site: <https://www.fireinspection360.com/occupantload>

Please feel free to contact the Fire Marshal or Building Official if you have occupant load related questions (email is preferred):

Butch Noble - Fire Marshal: 425-471-0904: butch.noble@bothellwa.gov

David Swasey - Building Official: 425-471-4812: david.swasey@bothellwa.gov