

What are the requirements for the posting of an occupant load?

The Manitoba Fire Code requires an occupant load placard to be posted in all *assembly occupancies* where the occupant load exceeds 60 persons. Where an occupant load placard does not exist, the Fire Prevention Branch may issue an order to establish an occupant load. **A permit will be required to establish an occupant load.** **Note:** Only City of Winnipeg placards are acceptable. MLCC cards are not acceptable as they may not have been determined by a code analysis.

What is an assembly occupancy?

Assembly occupancy means the *occupancy* or the use of a building, or part thereof, by a gathering of persons for civic, political, travel, religious, social, educational, recreational or like purposes, or for the consumption of food or drink. (e.g. restaurant, private club, schools, churches, daycare centres, etc.)

Am I required to retain a Professional to determine the occupant load?

In most cases it is in your best interests to retain the services of an Architect skilled in the appropriate sections of the code to assess your building to determine what occupant load is appropriate. The professional would act on your behalf.

Where the occupant load exceeds 100 persons, the City will require that you retain the services of an Architect.

For a space involving an occupant load of less than 100 persons the City will review applications to establish the occupant load providing proper information is submitted with the request.

What information is required to obtain a permit to establish an occupant load?

- For buildings with an occupant load of 100 persons or less, fully dimensioned building plans are required. These plans must indicate the location and size of exit doors and/or stairs and also the number of sanitary fixtures.

- For buildings with an occupant load of more than 100 persons, building plans and/or a report from an Architect is necessary.

Where can I find the occupant load requirements for an assembly space in a building?

The requirements pertaining to occupant loads for an assembly space are found in Part 3 of the Manitoba Building Code under Subsection 3.1.16. This part of the Code specifies the requirements for determining the occupant load for a floor area or part of a floor area.

How is the occupant load calculated for an assembly space?

An occupant load is calculated by dividing the area of the space under consideration by the “Area per person” specified in Table 3.1.16.1. of the Code.

This calculation results in the minimum “design occupant load” for the space under consideration. The Code intends that all buildings be designed, constructed, and maintained to safely accommodate this occupant load.

The typical “Area per person” values taken from Table 3.1.16.1. for Assembly spaces are:

ASSEMBLY	AREA PER PERSON
Space with non-fixed seats	0.75 m ² (8 ft. ²)
Space with non-fixed seats and tables	0.95 m ² (10 ft. ²)
Dining, beverage and cafeteria space	1.2 m ² (13 ft. ²)

In assembly spaces with fixed seating, the occupant load is based on the number of fixed seats.

What Code requirements depend on occupant load?

A number of other Code requirements are related to the “design occupant load”. These include:

- a) the number and/or size of exits provided;
- b) the number of washrooms required;
- c) the need for a fire alarm system, exit signs and emergency lighting;
- d) the need for special door hardware;
- e) the need to provide access for disabled persons;
- g) the need to comply with the requirements for a high building;
- h) direction of door swing.
- i) the ventilation capacity

Other Considerations:

The fire separation of exits, stair rise and run, handrail, guardrails, etc. may require upgrading on order by the Fire Prevention Branch depending on the degree of non-compliance.

Can I increase the occupant load of an Assembly space that has been “posted” with the minimum design occupant load?

Yes, providing it can be shown that the building can accommodate the increased occupant load. Of particular importance is the number and width of exits serving the assembly area.

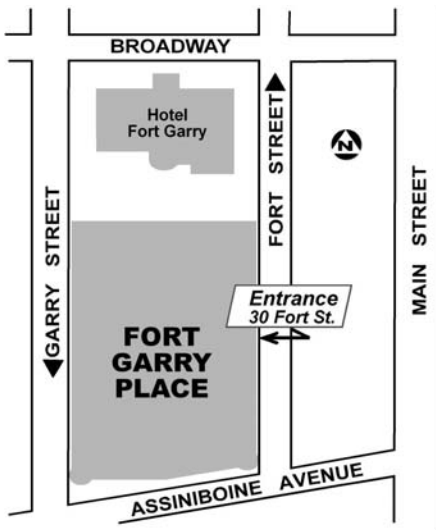
However, increasing the occupant load will prompt other requirements such as upgrading exits (ie. enclosing open stairs by a fire separation), installing fire doors for an exit enclosure, the need for additional washrooms, installing a fire alarm system, etc.

Is there an upper limit on the occupant load of a room?

Yes, the upper limit cannot exceed 0.4 m² per person. This requirement is contained in the Manitoba Fire Code.

In-Person Customer Service Hours are:
Tuesday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm - All Zoning, Permits and Plan Examination services are available at Unit 31 – 30 Fort Street.

Mondays 8:30 am to 4:30 pm are reserved for telephone inquiries and completed application drop-offs. This enables Zoning and Permits staff to process building and development applications received throughout the week.



Assembly Occupant Loads

A general guideline on the Building Code requirements for Occupant Loads for Assembly Spaces.



For inquiries, please contact:

**Plan Examination Branch
PH: 204-986-5268**

or



**Winnipeg
at your service.**

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