



Determining Occupant Load/Capacity

Under Governor Inslee’s [re-opening plan](#), King County is at Phase 1 as of the date above. In anticipation of going to Phase 2, certain businesses will be able to re-open but at reduced capacity.

In planning for Phase 2 and 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. 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 Governor’s Plan.

This document is provided, as a reference tool, to assist with your determining your (unofficial) occupant load. The official occupant load has been provided by your local building department and can be usually found on your occupancy permit for your business. 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](#): 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](#): 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, 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 reopening reduces the normally allowable occupant load to help maintain proper social distancing.