

# WHAT DO I NEED TO PASS FINAL INSPECTION?

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That question is one we get on a regular basis both at City Hall and in the field. People involved in or affected by the building and inspection process want to know exactly what has to be done in order to receive approval for occupancy on their project. Of course, what we would like to see is for the job to be one hundred percent completed before we're called in for a final inspection. That is often not the case. This article will attempt to provide a basic guide as to what is needed to pass a final and/or use and occupancy inspection.

Since the requirements are different for commercial code and residential code jobs, we'll look at each separately.

## COMMERCIAL CODE JOBS

In order to get at least some type of approval (e.g. a temporary) on a final inspection and/or use and occupancy inspection, the following items are absolutely necessary, with no exceptions allowed.

- **Final electrical approval from City of Gaithersburg electrical inspector.**  
At least a temporary approval from the electrical inspector is required before occupancy approval will be considered.
- **Final fire code approval from City of Gaithersburg fire inspector.**  
At least a temporary approval from the fire inspector is required before occupancy approval will be considered.
- **Final plumbing and gas approval from WSSC inspector.**  
Although there are rare circumstances where a temporary occupancy can be granted without a WSSC final approval, at least a temporary approval from the WSSC inspector is required before occupancy approval will be considered.
- **Final approval from Montgomery County Department of Health** is required for restaurants, grocery stores and any food handling occupancies. Final approval from Montgomery County Department of Health is also required for swimming pools. At least a temporary approval from the health inspector is required before occupancy approval will be considered.
- **Final site approval from City of Gaithersburg site inspector.**  
If the job has site work, at least a temporary approval from the site inspector is required before occupancy approval will be considered.

Once all the items listed above that are relevant to your job have been approved, at least on a temporary/conditional basis, then the City of Gaithersburg building inspector is able to perform the inspection. The building inspector is the person who makes the final decision as to whether a building, space, etc., qualifies for final and/or use and occupancy approval.

In addition to checking off whether the items above were done or not, the City of Gaithersburg building inspector will check the job for compliance with applicable building code, mechanical code, accessibility code, and energy code requirements. Another thing the building inspector checks that is often overlooked is how well the job has been cleaned up. There have been numerous occasions where the make or break item on a decision whether to grant final approval and/or occupancy was that the job was in terrible condition regarding trash, construction debris and supplies laying all over the place. The building inspector will also check to see that all necessary paperwork has been submitted, and that it says exactly what it needs to say. Listed below are some typical documents needed to obtain a final approval/use and occupancy:

- ✓ If the job required private engineering inspections, the final certification letter from the inspecting engineer(s) must be submitted before occupancy approval will be considered. The letter must be an original document, signed and sealed by the engineer.
- ✓ Flame spread rating data for all finishes (i.e. wall coverings, paneling, ceiling tile, carpet, etc.). Document must be from a nationally recognized testing agency, and list the final rating determined by the test for flame spread: Class I or A, 0 to 25 flame spread; Class II or B, 26 to 75 flame spread; and Class III or C, 76 to 200 flame spread. Document must also list smoke development rating of 450 or less.
- ✓ If the job requires it, a copy of the air balancing report must be submitted to the City of Gaithersburg building inspector at the time of final inspection.
- ✓ Any other documents specifically related to your job not mentioned here.

## **RESIDENTIAL CODE JOBS**

Order to get a final inspection and/or use and occupancy approval, the following items are absolutely necessary, with no exceptions allowed.

- **Final electrical approval from the City of Gaithersburg electrical inspector.**
- **Final fire code approval from the City of Gaithersburg fire inspector**, if a building has fire sprinklers.
- **Final plumbing and gas approval from the WSSC inspector.**

Once all the items listed above that are relevant to your job have been approved, then the City of Gaithersburg building inspector is able to perform the inspection. The building inspector is the person who makes the final decision as to whether a building permit qualifies for final and/or use and occupancy approval.

In addition to checking off whether the items above were done, the City of Gaithersburg building inspector will check the job for compliance with applicable building code, mechanical code, and energy code requirements. For example, the building inspector will check tread and riser dimensions on

stairs, handrail size, placement and extension, guardrail height and spacing, positive drainage away from the exterior of the house, permanent property corners in place, and other pertinent items.

Another thing the building inspector checks that is often overlooked is how well the job has been cleaned up. There have been numerous occasions where the make or break item on a decision whether to grant final approval/or occupancy was that the job was in terrible condition regarding trash, construction debris and supplies laying all over the building and/or the site. The building should be in-move-in condition at the time of final inspection.

The building inspector will also check that all necessary paperwork has been submitted, and that it says exactly what it needs to say. Listed below are some typical documents needed to obtain a final approval/use and occupancy:

- ✓ Soil bearing certification
- ✓ Wall pour certification
- ✓ Lead walk certification
- ✓ Front walk certification
- ✓ Final lot survey
- ✓ Miscellaneous certificates, such as fireplace hearth pour.

*Note: All of the above must be original documents signed and sealed by a Maryland licensed engineer.*

Also:

- ✓ Winter letter from builder regarding painting, stabilization, etc.
- ✓ Winter release from builder and homeowner (signed by homeowner and notarized) regarding pavement not in due to weather, etc.

## **CONCLUSION**

Remember that while your primary concern may be your client, your business, the tenant or owner who is moving in, a bonus or a penalty on your contract, our primary concern is always protecting the safety, health and welfare of the public. Here in the City of Gaithersburg, we go to great lengths to be as fair, consistent and timely as possible with our inspection service. However, the safety of the public can never take a back seat to any private or business-related concerns.

A comprehensive list of required inspections for both residential and commercial jobs may be obtained at the Planning and Code Administration located on the first floor of City Hall at 31 S. Summit Avenue.

All final inspections and use and occupancy inspections must be called in by no later than 6 p.m. and will be done the following workday. The inspection line number is 301-258-6338.