

# Reduced capacity and occupant loads

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## Businesses and services open with restricted capacity

Retail businesses may remain open with capacity limited to 15% of the occupancy set under the Fire Code (minimum of 5 customers).

Places of worship may gather with capacity limited to 15% of the occupancy set under the Fire Code.

## Occupancy under the Fire Code

The occupant load is the maximum number of persons allowed within a building or a suite within a building.

## Business occupant load

All businesses with a physical location in Alberta have an occupant load as a requirement of the provincial building and fire codes. Information about your occupant load may or may not be on site.

## Finding occupant load

Your building or suite within a building may have an occupant load number posted near the main entrance.

If your building or suite within a building has been recently built or renovated, the building permit documentation will likely contain your occupant load number.

A fire safety codes officer may also have completed an updated occupant load calculation for your business.

## Building permit documentation

Your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction (building department) may have information regarding your building permit documentation.

If you don't know how to reach your municipality or local authority having jurisdiction, you can access their contact information via the dropdown list in the following link:

<https://www.safetycodes.ab.ca/permits-inspections/where-to-get-a-permit/>

## Approximating restricted capacity

If you are unsure of your current occupant load, and have been unable to locate it, the following steps can help approximate your restricted capacity.

### Retail Businesses:

- Retail stores
- Alcohol and cannabis stores
- Grocery stores
- Pharmacies
- Clothing stores
- Computer/ technology stores
- Hardware stores
- Automotive stores, stations & shops
- Farmers markets

### **Step one:**

Measure the approximate area (square metres) of your floor space used by customers, excluding the washrooms. This is done by measuring the length of one wall and the length of the adjoining wall in metres (not feet).

### **Step two:**

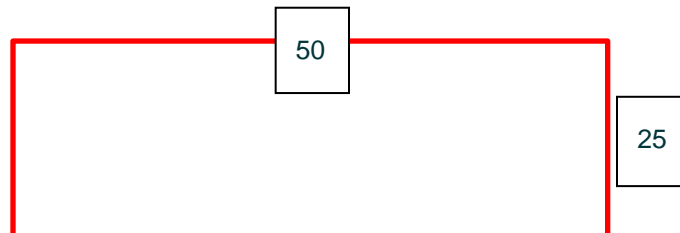
Multiply these two numbers together to get your floor area.

### **Step three:**

Divide this floor area number by **3.7** to determine your usual occupant load.

### **Step four:**

Multiply your usual occupant load by 15% (0.15) to determine your restricted capacity.



Example for retail store:

### **Step 1:** Measure two adjoining walls

- Measured length of north wall = 50 metres
- Measured length of west wall = 25 metres

**Step 2:**  $50 \times 25 = 1250 \text{ metres}^2$

**Step 3:**  $1250 \text{ metres}^2 \text{ divided by } 3.7 = 338 \text{ persons}$

**Step 4:**  $338 \times 0.15 = 51 \text{ patrons}$

51 patrons could be in the retail space in this example. This number does not include staff.

Most of the above facilities should have a posted occupant load. Multiply this number by 15% to determine your restricted capacity. If you cannot locate this number, call your local municipality.