

Construction Industry Communication #25

From: Amit Ghosh, Chief Building Official
Re: Residential Sales Office Building Permit and Time-Limited/
Final Occupancy Procedures
Date: May 15, 2017

Requirements: A Residential Sales Office requires similar building and Certificate of Occupancy permitting processes as those of new, single-family dwellings, PLUS a Time-Limited Certificate of Occupancy (TLO).

Background: In order to more effectively monitor permits and issue Time-Limited and Final Certificates of Occupancy, the Columbus Department of Building and Zoning Services (BZS) has implemented procedures regarding the construction and use of single-family dwelling units as a Residential Sales Office.

BZS defines a Residential Sales Office as:

- One or more single-family dwelling units constructed to function as a sales office for the purpose of display and selling individual dwelling units, OR
- One or more dwelling units having a garage constructed as an office space wherein business is conducted, OR
- One or more dwelling units used for the representation of a style of house to be purchased and requires either interior and/or exterior modifications made to the dwelling unit or site to make-ready for the sale of the dwelling unit.

Memorandum: A building permit, similar to the standard new home building permit, with applicable fees, will be issued for the construction of a Residential Sales Office. At the same time, the applicant will also purchase a Time-Limited Occupancy (TLO) in accordance with the current Fee Schedule, which is valid for one (1) year, in accordance with the Columbus Zoning Code.

At the time of application, the applicant has the option to purchase additional 1-year TLO certificates, not to exceed a total of five (5) years.

When construction is complete, in compliance with the approved plans and passes inspection(s), a Time-Limited Occupancy may be approved, indicating the dwelling is permitted to be used as a Residential Sales Office for the yearly increments specified and purchased by the applicant.

Upon completing the final inspection, the structural inspector will result the inspection as a TLO which will schedule an inspection for the expiration date of the TLO. At that time the structural inspector will verify that;

An alteration permit has been obtained to complete the work necessary to convert the Residential Sales Office to a single-family home as the TLO will expire on a given

date and the dwelling can no longer be occupied as a sales office.

OR

The Residential Sales Office permit can be renewed under the existing building permit for ONE additional period of up to five (5) years maximum. Prior to the initial TLO expiration date, the applicant will pay the appropriate TLO fee for the yearly TLO increments specified (up to five years maximum).

When the Residential Sales Office is no longer needed, alteration permits (structural, electrical and/or mechanical) will be required to convert the office to a garage and/or make other modifications to the interior or exterior. Work may include removing all additional electric, removing heat runs to the garage used as the sales office and the installation of garage doors, sidewalks and/or driveways, etc. Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for a dwelling unit, all work must pass inspection(s) and receive final approval by the BZS inspectors.

Revised 4/3/2026