



# Charlotte County Government

*"To exceed expectations in the delivery of public services."*

[www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov)

## **Commercial Business Guide: Commercial Name Change (CNC) or Change of Occupancy**

(Revised August 2019)

Charlotte County is "Open for Business!" It's a great place to own and operate one and we want to help you succeed. Like every local government, we have rules and regulations that business owners must follow. This guide's purpose is to answer the most commonly asked questions that one may have when starting a new business. Hopefully, this guide will make the process a little easier.

### **STEP 1: Verify Zoning Requirements.**

Please make yourself aware of what is, and is not, allowed for the business you are going to operate by checking on zoning requirements. Each zoning district has different requirements. Commercial General (CG), which is the most restrictive of the zoning classifications, does not allow the outdoor display of merchandise or certain types of businesses. Additionally, some properties are part of DRI's (Developments of Regional Impact) or Overlay Zones in which additional regulations must be met.

To verify the zoning district and if the business is allowed, please contact the Zoning Section at 941.743.1964 or [PlanningZoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov](mailto:PlanningZoning@CharlotteCountyFL.gov). If you already know the zoning district and want to review the allowable uses, please visit the county's website at [www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov) and use the search button for the Code of Laws & Ordinances. The Zoning Ordinance is Chapter 3-9 of the Code.

### **STEP 2: Verify Sewer or Septic Tank Service.**

If the building is served by a septic tank, an additional form will need to be completed and taken to the Health Department for approval.

### **STEP 3: Apply for a CNC (Commercial Name Change) Permit (a.k.a. "Change of Occupancy").**

This permit/process is required for any business that is about to occupy a new building or location. The process is also required by the Florida Building Code. The Change of Occupancy Application form can be found on the Forms & Documents page of our website under the "Zoning Forms & Documents" heading.

- Pay the application fee of \$101.
- Attach a building floor plan or sketch.
- Attach a parking lot site plan or sketch.
- Page 2 of the application form must be signed and notarized.

- Attach a copy of a signed lease or a property owner consent letter (if rented).

**STEP 4: Application Review & Approval (please allow 5 to 10 business days for processing).**

The following are part of the CNC/Change of Occupancy application review and inspection process:

- **Zoning Section – Review:**

1. Determination that the business use is allowable in the zoning district.
2. Determination if any impact fees are required to be paid.

- **Building Construction Division – Review:**

1. Determination of occupancy load and separation requirements.
2. Determination of accessibility requirements.
3. Determination of interior alterations have been performed or are needed.

**STEP 5: Issuance of CNC Permit and Scheduling & Passing of Inspections:**

Once the CNC is issued, please visit the Tax Collector's Office to apply for your BTR (Business Tax Receipt). Next, if ready, please schedule the following inspections (see Permit/Inspections Job Card for the list of required inspections):

- **Zoning/Code Compliance Inspector – Zoning Final Inspection:**

1. Verification that the street number is properly posted on the building and the unit number (if applicable) is posted on the door.
2. Verification that there is parking as required for the use proposed and that handicap parking spaces and signage is present.
3. Verification that the business has obtained a current BTR from the Tax Collector's Office.
4. Verification that there are no unpermitted or prohibited signs or banners installed.

- **Fire Inspector – Fire-Commercial Change of Occupancy Inspection:**

1. Verification that the type of occupancy proposed is correct.
2. Verification that the exit(s) and other doors are accessible and operational.
3. Verification that the exit light(s) and emergency lighting are operational.
4. Verification that fire alarms and/or fire sprinklers (if required) are operational and certified.
5. Verification that fire extinguishers/extinguishing systems are in place, operational and certified.
6. Verification that grease hoods/suppression systems are in place, operational and certified (if required).
7. Verification that applicable requirements for daycare centers/health care centers are met (where applicable)
8. Verification of a minimum of one 2A10BC fire extinguisher for every 3000 square feet (75 feet of travel space) are in place and certified by an extinguisher company.
9. Verification of the presence of exit signs and emergency lights. The need for these is determined on the basis of the requirements of the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). The determination is made at the time of the inspection with no penalty to the applicant.

