



CATAWBA COUNTY BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

SAFETY INSPECTION PROCEDURES

Scope:

The "Safety Inspection" was developed to provide an additional service by allowing the customer an opportunity to have an inspector visit an existing building and determine if a permit is required and/or if plans for the project is required. The safety inspector will evaluate the condition of the building in regards to any minor alterations to the existing floor plan and proposed use to determine if the owner needs permits and/or plans. The Safety Inspector will then determine if any follow-up inspections are to be conducted by the Safety Inspector or a regular field inspector.

The "Safety Inspection" was not intended for use as an enforcement tool concerning work without permits, placement of "Stop Work" orders, evaluation of fire damaged buildings, or residential alterations. The "Safety Inspection" is not intended to be used on every commercial renovation, but only the projects that request assistance in determining what is needed in regards to permits and plans.

A Safety Inspection will be required for all "ABC" inspections, Daycares, Residential Care Homes, and Adult Daycare annual inspections. A Safety Inspection is never a requirement for a building that is changing occupancy types. The customer can always obtain a building permit, submit plans for review, and follow the normal path of inspections for a project. The use of a Safety Inspection is an alternative for the customer if they wish to use it.

All projects are not suited for Safety Inspections. The following Questions should be asked before a Safety Inspection Permit is issued:

1. Is the building to be used as a commercial building? *Safety Inspections are not intended for buildings to be used as a Single Family Residence. Changing from residential to commercial use, however, will allow a Safety Inspection.*
2. Is an Architect or Engineer designing plans for the project already? *If plans are already being developed, the use of a Safety Inspection is not required or needed. The only time a safety inspection will be required when a designer is involved will be when the designer is applying the "Rehab Code" to the project.*
3. Is there an obvious requirement for a building permit on the proposed project? *If a permit may be required, a Safety Inspection can be issued to make that determination. If it is obvious no permit is required, and the occupancy is not changing, then a Safety Inspection is not needed.*
4. Is there to be a change in use (occupancy type) of the building? *If the use of the building is not changing and there are no alterations or renovations being done to the building, there are no requirements for permits and no need for a Safety Inspection. A change in ownership of the building alone will not need a Safety Inspection. If the use is changing and/or alterations are to be made, a Safety Inspection can be issued to determine if plans and permits will be required.*

It should be noted that any time another department requests the assistance of a Building Inspector for a Safety Inspection, a safety inspection fee needs to be charged and the Inspector notified of the request and inspection!