



## **Certificate of Occupancy – Multi-Family, Commercial and Industrial**

Under the St. Mary's County Building Code, a Certificate of Use and Occupancy is required for all new buildings prior to occupancy. Issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy is also required for buildings being altered, enlarged or substantially renovated. Although in some situations no physical changes to an existing building are proposed, a "change of use" may trigger the Building Code to require alterations prior to occupancy and, correspondingly, the issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy.

Applicants may also request an inspection and issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy for an existing building. If there are no outstanding violations of the Code, and it is established that the building can be occupied safely, the Certificate may be issued.

In addition, a Certificate may be required for the site per the St. Mary's County Zoning Ordinance if site work is required, even though no alteration or other changes to existing buildings are necessary. If required by the Zoning Ordinance, all agency "sign-offs" must be obtained prior to the issuance of the Certificate.

At the time a building permit is issued, the applicant is given a Final Inspection Card. This card lists all agencies which are required to "sign-off" on a building or site prior to issuance of a Certificate of Use and Occupancy. The card must be placed on the construction site. It is the applicant's responsibility to call the appropriate agencies for final inspections and sign-offs. The agency telephone numbers are listed on the card. If certain inspections and approvals are NOT required, that portion of the card will be marked "N/A" before it is given to the applicant. When all agencies have signed the card, the applicant must bring the card to the Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

Upon good cause shown, a temporary Certificate of Use and Occupancy may be issued. However, in order for a temporary Certificate to be issued, the applicant must demonstrate that the building and site can be occupied safely and all agencies required to sign-off on the card must agree to the issuance of the temporary Certificate. A bond may be required to insure completion of the unfinished work if a temporary Certificate of Use and Occupancy is issued.

**Questions about the Certificate of Occupancy process may be directed to the Inspections Coordinator/Records Technician at the Department of Land Use and Growth Management at 301 475-4200, Ext 1580.**