

# Charter School Facilities Approval Process

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# What is OSF?

The Office of School Facilities (OSF) is the Authority having jurisdiction functioning as the Building Official, for all the K-12 public schools in South Carolina. This includes Charter Schools.

Our mission is to effectively and efficiently ensure a healthy, safe, and appropriate school learning environment for every student.

# How does this Effect Charter Owners

- OSF must be notified of all buildings to be used as charter schools.
- Design documents are required for both new buildings and existing buildings to be used as schools, OSF will conduct plan reviews of these documents.
- A building cannot be used as a charter school until a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) has been issued by OSF.

# Existing Facilities

- Be wary of signing a lease agreement prior to having a professional evaluation of an existing building.
- Schools are held to a higher safety standard than the typical business or residence.
- An existing building may need significant improvements before it can be used as a school.
- Even an existing private school or a school that has been vacant for some time will need improvements.

# #1 Get an Architect

- Whether the building is new or old, a design professional is required for design work on a school per State law.
- The sooner in the process that architectural services are obtained, the sooner you will be able to get in your building.
- After the initial notification, communication with OSF should come from the architect.

# What an Architect Should do for You

- Judge the feasibility of existing buildings.
- Prepare design documents to accommodate the needs of your program.
- Work with other professional services as necessary, and provide code, zoning, land use, and transportation analyses.
- OSF does not provide design services.
- Bidding for construction cannot occur until plans are approved by OSF

# What Else do You Need?

- Chapter 1 Building Code Inspections
  - The Local Building Official may provide these as part of a local building permit. Application for a local building permit can be done at the same time as the submittal of construction documents to OSF.
- Chapter 17 Building Code Inspections
  - Conducted by an accepted third party contractor.
- The architect will assist with the selection of inspectors.
- Chapter 1 and 17 inspections occur during the construction process.

# OSF Inspections

- OSF must be contacted for an Above Ceiling Inspection per 904 of the S.C. School Facilities Planning and Construction Guide (*Guide*)
- OSF must be contacted for an Occupancy Inspection per 906 of the *Guide*.
- Occupancy of the facility cannot happen until OSF has issued a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) acknowledging that an acceptable final inspection has been completed.



# Why do We Need All This?

- Safety
- Liability



# Useful Submittal Information on Our Website

- Charter School Facilities Approval Process
- Non-health and Non-Safety Requirements
- Form for Charter Facility Notification to the Office of School Facilities
- Charter Facilities approval Process Presentation

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Innovation-and-Support/Facilities/CharterSchoolApplicationGuide.html>

# Contact Information

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