



## Chapter 12 - Inspections & Certificates of Occupancy

### Purpose

The issuance of any building permit gives the permit holder the right to proceed with the construction project. Construction is limited to the scope of the project delineated on an approved set of plans, a permit, a permit job card or any combination of the three. At various stages of construction or remodeling, inspection is required. What is required to be inspected, when an item must be inspected and the timeliness of an inspection are all dependent upon the nature of the building permit project. Generally, all required inspections for building, electrical, elevator, mechanical, plumbing, sewer or fire suppression/alarm system installation or work are scheduled by the licensed contractors who have been contracted to do the construction, and/or have been issued the pertinent building and/or trade construction permits.

### Examples of Activities That Require Inspection By OCI

- Building or structure (walls, roof, etc.)
- Engineered fill
- Foundation systems and components
- Concrete construction
- Erection and placement of steel and steel framing
- Erection of masonry
- Erection of pre-cast concrete or other pre-cast materials
- Certain fire-resistive materials
- Fire resistive rated walls, ceilings, beams, columns and floors
- All electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems/components (BEFORE concealment)
- Fire alarm/smoke detection systems
- Fire protection systems (sprinklers)
- Grease hoods and duct systems
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) compliance
- Proper installation of required screening, landscaping and landscape buffering
- Swimming pools, including pool structures, fencing, electrical and plumbing systems
- Spas/whirlpools
- Remodeling, including structural building and any trade work
- Roofing and siding, new or replacement
- Final grading
- Final inspection for building occupancy

## Scheduling Inspections and Obtaining Results of Inspections

Generally, licensed contractors that are included on or attached to the permit request OCI construction permit inspections. Licensed contractors are assigned special access codes that allow them to schedule required or desired inspections 24 hours a day, seven days a week by either of two methods, 1) through the City of Wichita's website, [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov) via "e-permits", or 2) by calling an automated telephone inspections scheduling system.

Inspections can be scheduled for the same day up to 6:30 a.m. when using the internet or automated phone system. All licensed contractors are strongly encouraged to utilize these automated inspection-scheduling systems.

The internet and automated phone scheduling systems allow contractors to request a specific day for an inspection, and a choice of a.m., p.m. or no time preference. For certain types of inspections, such as concrete pours or bond-beam inspections, the contractor can request a specific one-hour window for the inspection.

These same internet and automated phone inspection scheduling systems allow OCI inspectors to post the results of inspections to the automated OCI permit and inspection tracking system from the field, and also allows contractors to obtain the results of inspections, including voice mail messages or "e-permit" notes from the inspector.

Contractors can also cancel previously scheduled inspections using the automated phone system, "e-permits", or by calling OCI at 268-4461 to cancel a requested inspection. There is no fee to cancel an inspection as long as it is cancelled through the dispatcher or directly to the inspector prior to the inspector being on site. However, if the inspection is not cancelled before the inspector arrives, the inspector has the option to charge a re-inspection fee for a "not ready/not cancelled" situation.

Inspections can also be requested by calling the OCI dispatch line at 268-4461 or 268-4468, and most homeowner-occupants who have obtained their own permits can schedule, cancel or obtain results of required inspections by calling this number between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on regular work days (Monday through Friday).

## Process Improvement Points

Make sure that structures are unlocked for requested inspections and readily accessible and that the approved set of plans, stamped by the Office of Central Inspection, is easily located and accessible to the inspector.

Make sure that the permit job card issued with the permit is easily located and accessible to the inspector. If there is no good place on the site to post the job card at the time of requested inspection, call the inspector to let them know where the job card will be.

## **When an Inspector Arrives at a Job Site, the Following Expectations Apply:**

- The site is clearly identified by an address.
- The permit and/or permit job card is posted in plain view.
- The site is readily accessible.
- Approved plans are clearly accessible at the job site.
- The work for which the inspection is requested is ready to be inspected.

Failure to provide for the above items could result in the inspection not being made, and in some cases could result in a \$30 re-inspection fee being charged to the contractor.

Inspectors will note inspections on the permit job card that is posted at the construction site. If problems are found during an inspection, the OCI inspector will leave a notice on the site that outlines the deficiencies. Construction inspectors can generally be reached in the office in person or by phone in the mornings between the hours of 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and in the afternoon after 3:30 p.m. at 268-4461.

### **Saturday, Holiday and After-Hours Inspections**

If it is necessary for inspections to be performed outside of normal work hours or inspection time frames, the OCI dispatcher must be contacted at 268-4461 by at least 3:00 p.m. for an after-hours inspection on that same workday, or by no later than 3:00 p.m. on the work day prior to a requested weekend or holiday inspection. Before such inspection can be confirmed, an after hours/weekend/holiday inspection fee that covers the cost of the overtime inspection service must be paid to OCI.

## **Process Improvement Points**

Inspectors can be reached by calling the general OCI dispatch number 268-4461, or the inspector's assigned mobile phone (phones numbers are posted in "E-Permits," on [OCI's web site](#), via [www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov), and available by calling 268-4461). Inspectors can also be reached by calling directly to the specific construction inspection sections listed below:

Structural/Building  
268-4461

Electrical/Elevator  
268-4465

Plumbing/Sewer  
268-4471

Mechanical (HVAC)  
268-4473

Fire Suppression/Alarm System  
268-4441

## Process Improvement Points

### Inspection of Fire Related Issues

OCI works closely with the Wichita Fire Department to ensure compliance with local fire protection requirements. OCI coordinates inspection activity for construction permits with fire department personnel (primarily for fire alarm systems, smoke detection systems, and fire suppression/sprinkler systems). Primary inspections conducted by the Fire Department for building permits include fire suppression, smoke detection and fire alarm system installation inspections when these systems are required as part of the building project.

### Special Inspections

The Building Code requires that for some types of construction, privately contracted special inspectors, with very specific expertise in a given field, inspect certain construction processes, usually on a periodic basis, but sometimes on a continuous basis. Certain types of steel fabrication/erection, masonry construction, concrete erection or engineered fill are some examples of processes that may require special inspection. During the project planning and plan review processes, an agreement outlining any required special inspection requirements, and who the special inspectors will be, must be completed and submitted to OCI prior to building permit issuance.

### Inspection of Boilers

The inspection and certification of boilers is handled directly through the State of Kansas.

### Final Inspections and Certificates of Occupancy

When the building or structure is complete, it is necessary to call for a final building inspection.

#### For one and two-family residential construction

A combination final inspection is generally conducted as part of the building inspector's final inspection, and includes the final inspection on the building structure/code, as well as plumbing and mechanical installation/code final inspections. Prior to calling for the final building inspection on one and

two-family construction, a separate final electrical inspection should be scheduled and approved. Once a final building inspection is approved, a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the one and two-family building, structure or space may be granted.

### **For commercial construction**

All appropriate final trade inspections (electrical/elevator, mechanical, plumbing and fire suppression/detection/alarm systems) must be scheduled and approved PRIOR to completion of the final building inspection, and prior to issuance of any CO for the building, structure or space. In many instances, especially for new construction, a number of tests need to be completed as part of the final building inspection.

Final COs are issued as part of the final satisfactory inspection of all permit requirements, and are included as part of the building permit job card.

### **Obtaining a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy**

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) allows the building, structure or space to be used or occupied on a temporary basis, prior to all project requirements being completed. Before a TCO can be issued, the OCI building inspector, fire inspector and OCI trade inspectors must determine that no substantial hazard will result from occupancy of the building or portion thereof. Generally, all life safety issues must be properly installed/completed to allow any public occupancy (exit systems, exit lights and emergency lighting, required fire detection, suppression and alarm systems, guardrails and handrails, fire-resistive walls and assemblies, HVAC and required smoke/fire dampers, site access and required public water, fire hydrant or sewer facilities, etc.).

A City of Wichita [Temporary Certificate of Occupancy request](#)/guide form should be submitted by the General Contractor. Forms can be obtained from OCI by calling 268-4461, or can be obtained from the OCI building inspector.

## **Process Improvement Points**

It is very important to communicate your intent to request a temporary CO or partial CO to your building inspector as soon as you are aware of the need, so that any preliminary walk-throughs can be arranged, temporary exiting procedures can be discussed, and possible obstacles can be identified. It is also good to clearly communicate as far in advance as possible the nature and extent of the TCO or Partial CO building usage (furniture placement and stocking only? some employee occupancy in restricted areas? etc). If known in advance, the building inspector and/or building supervisor can also coordinate TCO requests with trade inspectors, Fire Department inspectors, and others as necessary.

TCOs are granted for a limited time. The intent is to allow use of the building while the project is being completed. OCI expects the general contractor to be moving towards completion of the project and to call for another final inspection of the project when completed. If for some reason the project cannot be completed by the stated TCO expiration date, the contractor needs to apply for or request a renewal or extension of the TCO. This request is made through the OCI building inspector.

### **Partial Certificate of Occupancy**

A Partial Certificate of Occupancy (PCO) may be granted for a portion of a building that has been completed to the extent that a CO or TCO can be issued for that portion of the project construction. This can be requested and arranged with the OCI building inspector for the project.

### **Letter of Credit Requirements**

On some projects, the contractor and/or owner may need a final CO before all permit requirements are met, or may need a TCO for an extended period of time. This generally occurs when weather does not permit installation of required landscaping, screening and/or landscape buffers, or final required paving and parking lot striping (for example, the TCO is requested on December 20<sup>th</sup>, and weather does not permit final paving/striping until March or April). In this situation, the contractor and/or project owner may submit to the Office of Central Inspection a financial institution “Letter of Credit” or financial guarantee, in a form approved by the City, in an amount equal to roughly 125% of the projected cost of installing the uncompleted items.

## **Process Improvement Points**

Question about Letter of Credit submissions may be directed to OCI at 268-4468.

### **Helpful Links Mentioned in this Chapter.**

[OCI](#)

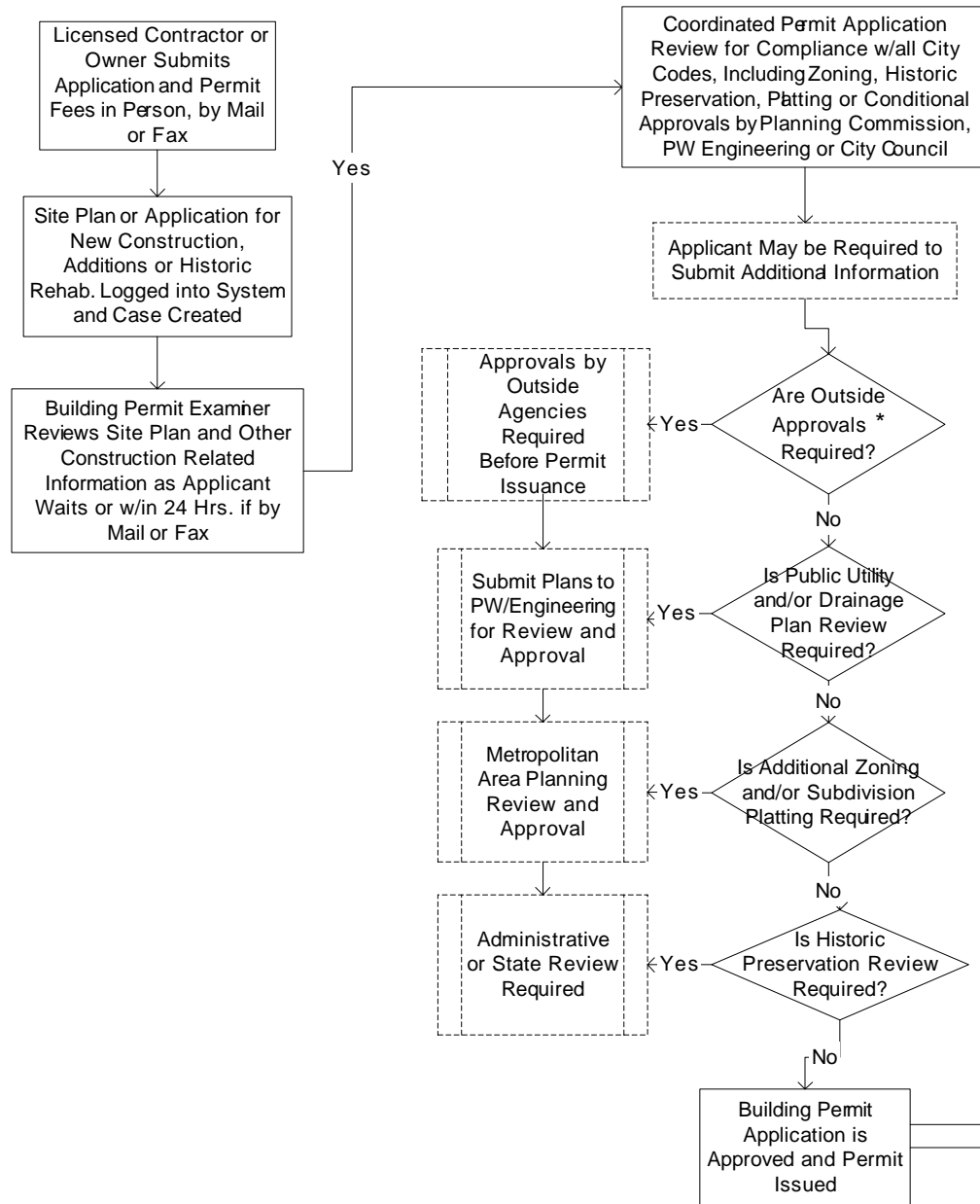
[E-Permits](#)

[Temporary Certificate of Occupancy request](#)

# CITY OF WICHITA

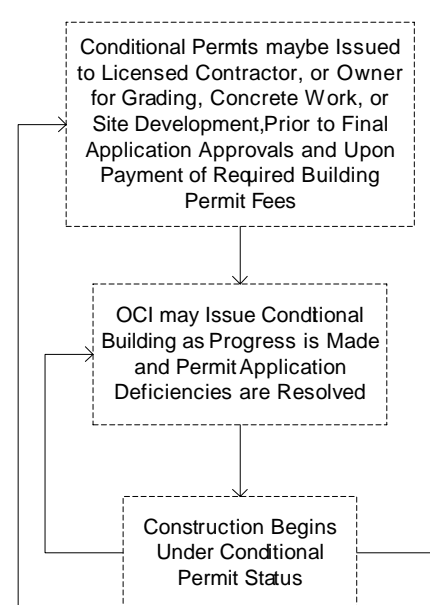
## PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS for RESIDENTIAL APPLICATIONS (Single and Two-Family - Additions, Remodeling and New Construction)

### Application/Plan Review



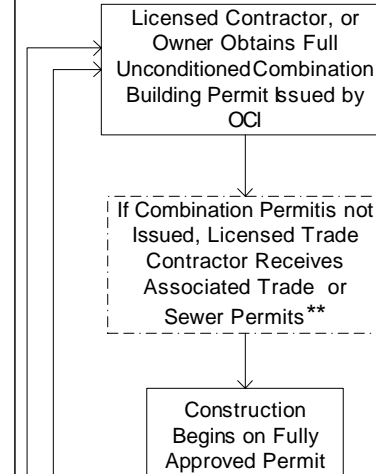
\* - Outside Approvals May Include FEMA, or State Historic Preservation Office

### Conditional Building Permit



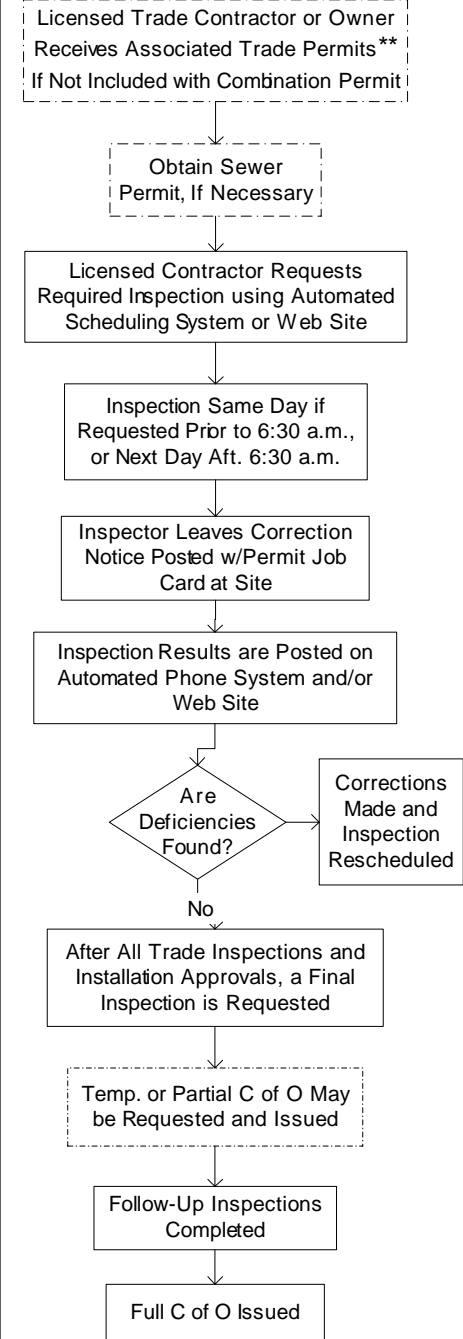
  Denotes Optional or Conditional Step

### Full Building Permit Issuance

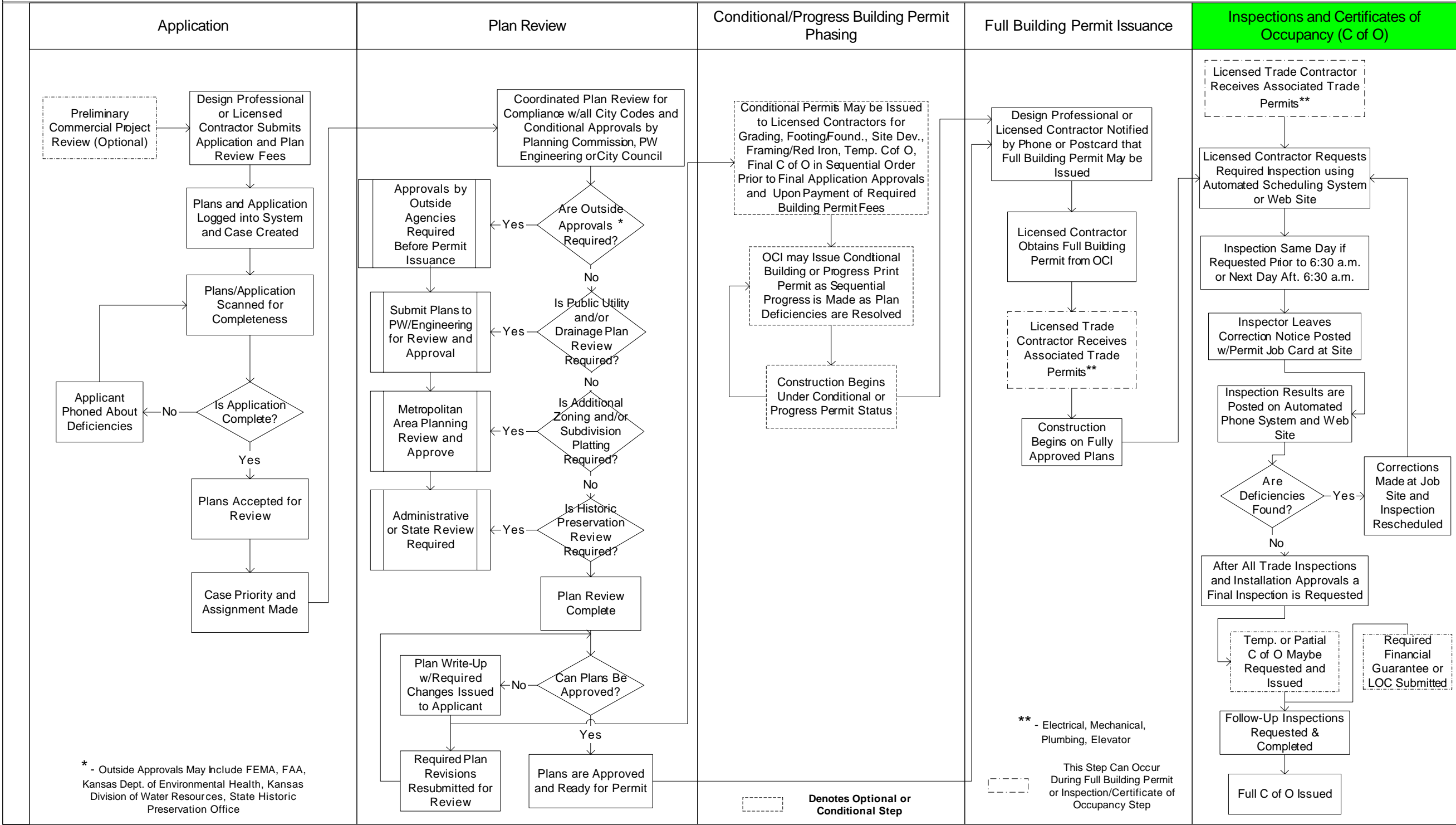


\*\* Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Elevator  
  This Can Occur During Full Building Permit or Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy Step

### Inspections and Certificates of Occupancy (C of O)



# CITY OF WICHITA PERMIT REVIEW PROCESS for COMMERCIAL APPLICATIONS



\* - Outside Approvals May Include FEMA, FAA, Kansas Dept. of Environmental Health, Kansas Division of Water Resources, State Historic Preservation Office

Denotes Optional or Conditional Step