The Codeword is used to clarify provisions of the Harris County Fire Code. The sole intent is to make clear acceptable practice.

No: CW 104-002, rev 1

Issued: June 5, 2014

Revised: May 10, 2015

Subject: Commercial Establishment- Change of Ownership or Change in Name

Code Ref: Harris County Fire Code Section 104

Question: I am buying a permitted business. Do I need new permits?

Answer: The purchase of a business which was operating under a valid Harris County permit and current inspection, and is still in operation, does not require new permits if:

- The business will continue to be operated for the purpose it was last permitted;
- There are no changes in occupancy classification; and
- There are no changes to walls, doors, means of egress, emergency lighting, or fire/life safety systems

A Change of Ownership or Name will require a completed affidavit submitted to the Permits Office and a Fire & Life Safety Inspection by the Harris County Fire Marshal’s Office.

A new permit will be required if:

- The occupancy classification or intended use changes — e.g. changing an insurance office into a restaurant;
- There are any changes to walls, doors, means of egress, emergency lighting, or fire/life safety systems
- The business is vacant, closed, or has not been in continuous operation.

Purchasing or leasing space in a building that is vacant or closed, no matter what the former occupancy was, will require a new permit, and the business will be subject to Fire Code Plan Review and inspection by the Harris County Fire Marshal.

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Building Official
Harris County Texas

Fire Marshal
Harris County, Texas

If you have any questions about this CODEWORD, please contact us at firecode@hcid.org or fmosupport@fmo.hctx.net