

**Express Plan Check Requirements -
Commercial Projects**

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Certain projects may qualify for *Commercial Express Plan Check* if they comply with the following:

A. Regular Commercial Express Plan Check Criteria:

- Tenant improvements involving retail use where the total floor area is less than 1,500 square feet.
- Tenant improvements involving office space where the total tenant floor area is less than 10,000 square feet.
- Tenant improvements involving restaurant use where the total dining area is less than 750 square feet and the work proposed is limited to the customer service area only. Projects where work is proposed in the kitchen, food preparation, and/or food storage areas do not qualify for regular express, but may qualify for enhanced express review (see below).

B. Enhanced Commercial Express Criteria:

- Tenant improvements of existing retail use (with minor structural calculations) up to 10,000 square feet.
- Tenant improvements of existing office/R&D office use (with minor structural calculations but **no HazMat**) up to 20,000 square feet.
- Tenant improvements of existing restaurant use with no increase in assembly use or added square footage. All restaurant TIs require prior approval from Santa Clara Health & Water Pollution Control.
- Cell Site installation with battery electrolyte less than 50 gallons, exterior battery system and no hazardous materials (i.e., diesel fuel generator).
- Roof top mechanical unit (without HazMat) maximum 2,500lbs.

Express plan review is done by appointment only. An appointment can be obtained by phoning (408) 535-3555 during business hours, Monday through Friday.

The following must be completed prior to your appointment:

- Building Permit form completed
- The minimum document submittal check list
- Completion of the Construction Cost Documentation form and a signed contract or a detailed cost breakdown of the project

Other Approvals and Clearances

Prior to submitting for *Express Plan Check*, approvals and/or clearances from other public agencies or City Departments may be required. Clearances may be required as follows:

- A Public Works clearance is often required. Public Works can be reached at (408) 535-3555.
- Changes to the building exterior require review and approval by the Planning Division. The Planning Division is located at City Hall. They can be reached at (408) 535-3555.
- Projects containing fire sprinkler or alarm alterations will require review and approval from the Fire Department. They can be reached at (408) 535-3555.
- Some projects, such as public swimming pools require approval from the county Health Department. For Health Department requirements, call (408) 918-3400.
- Some projects may require approval from the Water Pollution Control District. They can be reached at (408) 945-3000.

- A Demolition Diversion deposit is required for projects with a valuation of \$5,000 or greater. ESD can be contacted at (408) 277-5700.

Documentation of required approvals and clearances is required prior to permit issuance.

Tenant improvement plan submittal requirements should include the following:

Three sets of plans must be submitted for building plan check review.

It is recommended you use a minimum of 18" x 24" and maximum of 24" x 36" and weighing no more than 25 pounds. Plans must be drawn to scale (1/4" per foot is the minimum scale). Plans requiring an engineer's or architect's stamp shall be wet stamped and wet signed by the licensed design professional.

Two sets of structural calculations are required when structural alterations are proposed and both sets shall be wet stamped and wet signed by the design professional.

Two sets of energy calculations are required when alterations are made to:

- The HVAC system (except for equipment replacement) or
- For Lighting changes (except for replacement of fixtures) or
- For Building envelope changes

The submittal set should contain a scope of work declaration; a site map that includes parking; plans showing the alteration location; existing and proposed floor plans; an analysis of occupancy groups; type of construction; an exiting analysis and disabled access details. Submittals should also include roof plan, sections, elevations, accessibility features and other applicable details.

If the project meets the criteria outlined, the Building Division staff will perform the plan check while the applicant waits. The Express Plan Check process will result in issuance of a permit or a list of required plan revisions.

If **minor changes** are needed, they can be revised at the time of express plan check. The registered engineer, architect, or a representative who is authorized to make red-marks and changes to the plans must be present during the Express Plan Check to expedite approval of plans with minor revisions.

If **major changes** are needed to the plans, the plans will have to be re-drawn. In some instances, due to special circumstances and/or complexity of a project, it may be necessary to take the plans in for a regular plan check.

Examples of projects that **do not qualify** for *Regular* Express Plan Check without prior approval by Building Division plan check supervisor are:

- New buildings or additions
- Alterations to occupancy group E (educational), F-2 (factories and manufacturing plants), I (institutional), L (laboratories), R-1 and R-2 (apartments, condominiums, hotels and motels), S-1 (repair garages), or S-2 (cold storage)
- Alterations to Assembly (A2 & A3) occupancies, such as a church or restaurant with an occupant load greater than 50
- High rise buildings (over 75 feet in height)
- OSHPD 3 licensed clinics
- Listed spray booths without prior approval from Fire Department
- Alternative energy installations (e.g. photovoltaic, fuel cell, etc...)
- Buildings damaged by fire, wind, earthquake or vehicle collision
- Work in basements and mezzanines
- Re-roofing or any roof/mansard work
- Retaining wall or sound wall more than 9' high
- Roof equipment units more than 1200 lbs.
- Change of occupancy/character to a higher hazard category
- Where hazardous materials exceed the amount allowed by the IBC
- Buildings with change of use from an R-3 occupancy to a B occupancy
- Buildings with atriums
- Tenant improvements on buildings qualified as Historical buildings or structures under National, State or Local Historical registers
- Projects with Alternate Materials and Methods of Construction
- New Food service projects that include work in the kitchen, food preparation, and/or food storage areas

Additional information can be obtained by visiting our website at www.sanjoseca.gov/building/, or by calling our Information Inspector's voice mail at (408) 535-3555 and leaving a detailed message. In addition you may visit the Building Division in City Hall at 200 East Santa Clara St., San Jose CA 95113-1905.