
Building Division Informational Handout

Sub-trade Commercial Express Plan Check Requirements (Plumbing, Mechanical, and Electrical)

Handout No. 2-5
Published: 8/21/00
Revised 5-05-15
Page 1 of 3

Express Plan Check is by appointment for projects that can be thoroughly reviewed, approved, and processed in 1-hr to 1.5 hours at a rate 1.5 times current regular review fees.

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

A) Regular Commercial Express Plan Check Criteria:

- Retail Tenant Improvements with total floor area for improvement being less than 1500 square feet.
- Office Tenant Improvements with total floor area for improvement being less than 10,000 square feet.
- Restaurant Tenant Improvements to dining area only, with total dining area being less than 750 square feet. **Again work proposed may only be located in the dining area.**

B) Enhanced Commercial Express Plan Check Criteria:

- Retail Tenant Improvement with the total area for improvement being less than 10,000 square feet, can have minor structural calculations.
- Office/R&D office Tenant Improvements with total floor area for improvements being less than 20,000 square feet, can have minor structural calculations.
- Existing Restaurant Tenant Improvements without change in use, tenant space size, or occupancy classification.
- Cell Site Installations, including battery backup systems with battery electrolyte quantity less than 50 gallons total, and battery system must be externally located.
- Rooftop Mechanical Equipment, new or replacement, with a maximum weight for the unit being 2500lbs and the CFM rating not greater than 2000 cubic feet per minute.

No project is qualified for Commercial Express Review if the project involves Hazardous Materials or Systems.

Generators are also not reviewed by Commercial Express Services.

All Commercial Express Reviews are done by appointment. An appointment can be obtained by calling 408-535-3555 during business hours Monday through Friday.

You must have one of the following if trying to have sub-trade review independent of any required building review for the project as a whole:

- Related Building Plan Check Number
- Related Building Permit File Number
- **If no building review or permit is required for the project you should indicate this on your drawings and explain your scope to our operators when making your appointment.**

The following must be completed prior to your appointment:

- Building Permit Application form completed
- Outside Clearances Obtained - as possible

Other Approvals and Clearances

Prior to attending your appointment for *Express Plan Check*, approval and/or clearances from other public agencies or City Departments may be required. Clearances that may be required are as follows:

- A Public Works clearance is often required. Public Works can be reached at (408) 535-3555.

Continue on next page

Other Approvals and Clearances Continued

- 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 not required for Sub-Trade only permits. Department of Environmental Services can answer questions regarding Demolition Deposits by calling 408-535-8550

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

Tenant improvement plan submittal requirements should include the following:

Two sets of plans must be submitted for sub-trade 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 energy calculations are required when alterations are made to:

- The HVAC system (except for equipment replacement) or
- For Lighting changes 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 *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)

List Continues on next page

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

- 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 are part of the project submittal
- Cell site where the battery electrolyte quantity is over 50 gallons, inside a building, or includes any other hazardous materials (i.e. diesel fuel for a generator)
- 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
- 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 asking to speak with a plan review staff for questions. In addition you may visit the Building Division in City Hall at 200 East Santa Clara St., San Jose CA 95113-1905 and speak directly to staff regarding questions that you may have.