




Restaurants & Take-Outs - Tenant Improvement Building Permit Application Checklist

Overview: This guide outlines the building permit application requirements and general considerations for locating or renovating an eating establishment in an existing building. This includes coffee shops, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, and food take-out businesses, but does not include pubs and liquor establishments.







Eating establishments are classified as either *Business and Personal Services (Group D)* or *Assembly Occupancy (Group A-2)*. An eating establishment with an occupant load of 30 or less may be classified as a *Business Occupancy*. All other eating establishments with occupant loads exceeding 30 are considered *Assembly Occupancies*.

Required Items:

- ☐ **Planning Approval**
The Zoning Bylaw regulates what type of business is permitted within the city. The proposed use and parking requirements should be confirmed with Current Planning staff prior to proceeding with a building permit application
 - ☐ **Building Permit Administrative Requirements**
 - ☐ [Building Permit Application](#)  - online application.
 - ☐ [Appointment of Agent](#)  is required if the permit is to be applied for, revised or permit issued to other than the registered owner. To be completed and submitted online as part of the building permit application process.
 - ☐ Application Fee (if construction value is over \$20,000). The application fee will be requested after your online building permit application has been accepted.
 - ☐ BC Building Code analysis - see [BC Building Code Analysis, Design Summary Form](#). .
 - ☐ **Site Plan or Key Plan**
 - ☐ Dimensions of site, including a north arrow, street names, and location and width of any lane(s)
 - ☐ Location and dimensions of the building, including vehicle access and parking stalls
 - ☐ Building area and number of floors
 - ☐ Street address, floor, and tenant suite number
 - ☐ Indicate area to be developed and adjoining tenant occupancies
 - ☐ Exiting for the tenant space and all other tenant spaces on the floor where the construction/alterations will occur
- Note: All sealed professional drawings and Letters of Assurance are to be submitted online with an electronic seal and signature as part of the online application.*
- ☐ **Floor Plans** (to scale 1/4"=1'0" or 1:50) Note: If the paper size exceeds 2' x 3', using a smaller scale may be acceptable to Building Inspections staff
 - ☐ Existing and proposed construction
 - ☐ All outside dimensions of tenant space and total area in square meters or feet
 - ☐ Dimension and use of all rooms and areas
 - ☐ Interior partitions, including height of partitions
 - ☐ All door sizes, doors in grilles (in malls), direction of swing and corridor widths
 - ☐ All plumbing fixtures; identify as new or existing
 - ☐ Seating, tables, and other millwork

Restaurant & Take-Outs Application Checklist

Required Items (Continued):

- ☐ **Construction Details**
 - ☐ Wall structure (cross-sections or written description, i.e., 5/8" type x gypsum board, 2"x 4" 16 gauge steel studs, 5/8" type x gypsum board)
 - ☐ Wall height (on cross-section). All areas with varying wall heights to be identified with specific heights.
 - ☐ Fire-resistance rating and the tested listed assemblies of any required fire separations, new and existing
 - ☐ Fire stopping / blocking details for all service penetrations of fire separation
 - ☐ Structural changes
 - ☐ All exit signs, emergency lighting, and fire alarm pull station location
 - ☐ Universal washroom, counter layout, doors and ramps that meet the 'accessibility' requirements (as applicable). *For more information, see our guide [Accessibility – Requirements for Persons with Disabilities](#) .*
 - ☐ Reflected ceiling plan
- ☐ **Plumbing Drawings**
 - ☐ Isometric plumbing drawings for plumbing changes, including name and phone number of plumber
For more information, see our guide [Isometric Plumbing Drawing Requirements](#) .
 - ☐ Grease trap capacity and dimensions of pot sink
 - ☐ [Plumbing Declaration Form](#)  (completed)
- ☐ **Cooking Equipment** – to be reviewed and approved by the Fire Rescue Department (Building Inspections forwards your plans to Fire Rescue as part of the building permit process)
 - ☐ Exhaust hoods complying with NFPA 96 are required where cooking may produce grease-laden fumes. All installation drawing details, including clearances to combustibles and manufacturer's documentation of products, must be submitted and be specific to the project. Design and inspection by a Mechanical Engineer may be required for existing kitchens, depending on the submission and the complexity of the installation. New installations are to be designed by a Mechanical Engineer; sealed design drawings and Letter of Assurance Schedule B will be required.
 - ☐ Installation detail of the hood, including interface of the extinguishing system detectors, piping, nozzles, fuel shut-off devices, agent storage containers, manual activation devices, and exhaust ducts. See the Fire Rescue Department's guide [Commercial Cooking Equipment Exhaust and Replacement Air Systems](#) .
 - ☐ Where cooking does not produce grease-laden fumes, the form [Commitment Not To Create Grease-Laden Cooking Vapours](#)  must be submitted along with your building permit application
 - ☐ All appliances identified on a floor plan
- ☐ **Health Approval by Island Health**
 - ☐ Floor plans, including decks, stamped by Island Health for all food and beverage services
- ☐ [Construction Fire Safety Plan](#) 


Restaurant & Take-Outs Application Checklist

Additional Items that may be required:


Note: All sealed professional drawings and Letters of Assurance are to be submitted online with an electronic seal and signature as part of the online application.


- ☐ **Coordinating Registered Professional** (Schedule A) – required for all new Assembly (A-2) eating establishments and for renovations to existing Assembly restaurants, depending on the complexity of the renovation.
- ☐ **Architectural Drawings – sealed** – required for all new Assembly (A-2) eating establishments and for renovations to existing Assembly restaurants, depending on the complexity of the renovation.
 - ☐ Letters of Assurance (Schedule B) with appropriate Architectural items initialed
- ☐ **Sprinkler Drawing** indicating existing and proposed installations and sprinkler contractor's name and business license number.

A Mechanical Engineer's design and review may be required where more than 8 heads are added or 20 heads relocated.

For more information, see our guide [Sprinkler Permit Applications](#) 

 - ☐ Letters of Assurance (Schedule B)
- ☐ **Plumbing Drawings – sealed**
 - ☐ Letters of Assurance (Schedule B)
- ☐ **Mechanical Exhaust Hood Drawings – sealed.** Design and field review by a Mechanical Engineer may be required depending on the submission and the complexity of the installation.
 - ☐ Letters of Assurance (Schedule B)
- ☐ **Structural Drawings – sealed** – for structural changes, including over-height walls, structural bulkheads, etc., and where a change of occupancy triggers the requirement for seismic restraint upgrading.

See our guide [Change of Occupancy](#) .

 - ☐ Letter of Assurance (Schedule B)
- ☐ **Sign Permit**
- ☐ **Business Licence**
- ☐ **[Occupant Load Calculation](#)**  Occupant Load Calculations for Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Board (LCRB) licence applications will not be provided by the City of Nanaimo. A letter to this effect is available upon request. It is possible to retain the services of an architect to provide the required calculation. A list of professionals is available on our website for your consideration: [Professionals List](#).

General Considerations:

Restaurants – with an occupant load of more than 30

These restaurants are considered Assembly occupancies under Part 3 of the BC Building Code and must be designed by an Architect. An Architect may not be required for renovations to an existing restaurant depending on the complexity of the project. This will be determined by Building Inspections staff.

Take-Outs and Small Restaurants with an occupant load of 30 or less


The 2018 BC Building Code allows a suite of Group A, Division 2 assembly occupancy to be classified as a Group D business and personal services occupancy provided:

- The occupant load of the suite does not exceed 30; and
- The suite is separated from the remainder of the building by a fire separation with a fire-resistance rating of not less than 1 hr.
- The fire separation required above need not have a fire-resistance rating where the suite is located in a building sprinklered throughout.
- A permanent sign indicating the lesser of the occupant load for the suite or 30 persons shall be posted in a conspicuous location near the suite's principal entrance.

Restaurant & Take-Outs Application Checklist

General Considerations continued:

Building Classification

Not all existing buildings have been designed to accommodate eating establishments with an occupant load of more than 30 (Assembly occupancy). If the size of the proposed restaurant suite, including other tenant spaces with an Assembly occupancy, is 10% or more of the floor area in which they are located, the building may need to be upgraded to meet the - 2018 BC Building Code (2018 BCBC). This is called a "Change of Occupancy". An assessment and re-classification is required to determine if upgrading is possible or viable. A Coordinating Registered Professional (Schedule A) and (Schedule B) from each Registered Professional of Record is required where a building is reclassified for Assembly occupancy. See our guide [Change of Occupancy](#)  for buildings less than 600m².


Seismic Upgrading

One of the most onerous "Change of Occupancy" upgrades that could be required for an existing building is seismic upgrading. An assessment by a Structural Engineer would be required to evaluate the building's structural capacity and any upgrading required.



The existing building or the seismic upgrading, if required, must comply with the National Research Council (NRC) standard, which requires a minimum of 60% of the seismic requirement of the current BC Building Code.

Building Permit Process:

Time:

The time require for a tenant improvement building permit review will depend on revisions required and if additional approvals, such as development permit, Island Health, Fire Department, etc., are required. The processing time may also be effected by the volume of permit applications received by Building Inspections and cannot be guaranteed. [Processing Times](#)  can be viewed on the City website.

Cost:

1. **Application fees** apply to building permits with a construction value over \$20,000. The fee is 10% of the estimated building permit fee with a minimum fee of \$175.00. The non-refundable fee is deducted from the final cost of the building permit. For assistance in estimating the application fee, see our webpage [Building Fee Calculations](#) .
2. **Permit fees** are based on the market value of construction as follows: first \$1,000 is \$105.00, each additional \$1,000 up to \$100,000 is \$10, each additional \$1,000 greater than \$100,000.01 is \$7.00. Additional fees including plumbing fixtures, sprinklers, etc. can be found in [Bylaw 7016](#) , Schedule A, available on the City web site.




Contact numbers for further information

Current Planning(250) 755-4429
Building Inspections.....(250) 755-4429
Plumbing Inspections(250) 755-4429
Sprinkler System(250) 755-4429
Liquor Licensing Branch ..(866) 209-2111

Nanaimo Fire Department(250) 755-4569
Public Health(250) 739-5800
Electrical1(866)566-7233
Gas and Propane1(866)566-7233

Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact a commercial building official at our office at 250-755-4429. This guideline should not be used as a substitute for existing building codes and other regulations. The building owner is responsible for compliance with all codes, bylaws, and other regulations whether or not described in this guideline.

Forms and guides specific to Building Inspections can be printed from the City of Nanaimo website www.nanaimo.ca  by typing your search word in the Search Bar or visiting the [Building Permits](#)  pages under Property & Development, or can be picked up at our office at 411 Dunsmuir Street. Bylaws can be found on our website under [City Bylaws](#)  on the main page.