



Tenant Improvements

BP-47

Department of Building and Planning

What is a tenant improvement?

A tenant improvement is the action required for completing, remodeling or altering a space within an existing building, speculative or otherwise. Typically this will require a building permit. The process of obtaining permits for a tenant improvement involves three major stages; In some instances a preapplication meeting may also be beneficial:

- Plans are submitted and reviewed for consistency with applicable code requirements.
- A permit is then issued to do the work shown on the plans.
- When the work has been completed, inspected, and approved a Certificate of Occupancy is issued and the space can be occupied/used.

What if I am moving into a Speculative/Shell Building?

A speculative building is typically a single or multi-tenant building that is essentially move-in ready, with only minor modifications necessary for tenant occupancy.

A shell building typically lacks interior improvements for all or some of the physically tenant spaces, requiring a greater degree of construction improvements prior to tenant occupancy.

Separate building permits and Certificates of Occupancy are required for each occupied tenant space. A permit is required for moving into a speculative or shell buildings even if no construction work is anticipated.

All permits are required prior to commencement of work.

What if I am moving into a space that was occupied by another tenant?

A safety inspection is required if you are moving into an existing space that was previously recognized and issued a Certificate of Occupancy, even if the proposed use and occupancy classification remain the same. For example, an insurance office to an insurance office of a different company (both are group B).

Proposals contemplated under the *safety inspection permit* process, entail no modifications to the space that would require additional permits, other than those necessary to correct a code violation, or repair/replace an existing plumbing fixture in its original location, for example.

For more information refer to brochure BP-32 *Safety Inspections* or contact our office at (509) 477-3675. If you need an updated Certificate of Occupancy under these circumstances, a safety inspection is required. Appropriate fees must be paid prior to inspection. After the safety inspection, a revised Certificate of Occupancy can most likely be issued reflecting the new tenant's name.

Change of Use and building additions

If you are changing the use or occupancy group of a building or tenant space, adding on to a building or modifying the construction of an existing space, you will need to fulfill permitting requirements not discussed in this brochure. Changing the use may result in changes in the number of required parking spaces or changes to the building to meet additional building and fire code requirements. Requirements for permits for change of use are described in brochure BP-41 *Commercial Change of Use*, and plan submittal requirements brochure BP-33 *Commercial Site Plans and Construction Drawings*. Requirements for permits for new construction and additions are described in Brochure BP-1 *Commercial Permits* and BP-33 *Commercial Site Plans and Construction Drawings*. Parking requirements are included in the International Building Code (IBC), accompanying standards for accessibility and the Spokane County Zoning Code.

How do I apply for a permit?

To submit an application for a tenant improvement permit the following information must be provided:

- Property address and suite/space number if applicable
- Parcel number of the proposed site.
- Legal description of the proposed site.

NOTE: This information can be found on your property tax statement or may be obtained from the County Assessor's office, our web site (www.spokanecounty.org/bp) or Build Regional Spokane (www.buildregionalspokane.org).

- Seven (7) copies of the site plan **if the project involves any site work, parking lot changes, exterior modifications (ramps, canopies).**
- Two (2) sets of plans (three (3) sets for food establishments) that include a detailed floor plan of the space (e.g. dimensioned plan, room uses, exit locations, accessibility details, space conditioning, lighting changes, plumbing changes, etc.) along with a master floor plan of the building identifying the location of the new tenant space and construction drawings for all proposed work (e.g. framing details for new walls, partitions, suspended ceiling details, etc.)
- The requirement for an Washington licensed architect's or engineer's stamp on tenant improvement drawings may be waived on drawings with sufficient clarity and detail and that demonstrate compliance with RCW 18.08.
- Additional information may be required.

How long will the application process take?

Proposals will be reviewed for compliance with applicable codes and routed to agencies with interest. Allow from one to three weeks minimum for review and response time or permit issuance.

Some items that LEAD TO DELAYS in the process are:

- Incomplete or illegible drawings, plans, or documents that do not illustrate compliance with minimum code requirements. (Providing complete and detailed site plans and construction drawings will greatly assist the review process).
- Accessibility issues that are not addressed
- Changes to space conditioning or lighting - NREC Plan Review/inspection contracts are required.
- Critical materials lists where applicable.

Who can perform remodeling work on a commercial building?

If the tenant improvement permit requires building code upgrades be advised: only building owners, full time employees of the building owners, and State Licensed Contractors may perform work on a commercial building. A tenant or business owner may not perform permitted construction work on a commercial building. Contact the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries for additional information (509) 324-2640.

What requirements must be met before tenant occupancy/final approval?

A Certificate of Occupancy is issued to identify that

a building (or portion thereof) has been inspected and approved by the building official for the intended use and no code violations have been identified.

Before tenant occupancy:

- All life-safety requirements for the main building/shell must be complete, including fire sprinkler systems and fire hydrants, fire assemblies, etc.
- Site improvements required by approved site plan(s) such as drainage controls, paving, parking and landscaping must be completed.
- All life-safety, code, and construction related features for the individual spaces intended for occupancy must be complete. If necessary, non-occupied areas may require separation from occupied areas.

Some commonly overlooked areas in tenant improvements include:

- Restrooms must meet accessibility requirements (see reverse).
- Where customer service counters are provided, an accessible counter top a maximum 36" in height must be provided.
- Address/suite numbers are required to be posted adjacent to the front door.
- Fire extinguishers are installed.
- Exit signage placed above all exit doors.

How much will the permit cost?

Fees for all permits are based on Spokane County Building and Planning's "Cost Recovery Fee Methodology". The adopted fee schedules reflect the costs to the Department for processing the permit, providing land use review, plan review, and inspections of the project. Please refer to the current fee schedules, or consult with Department staff.

Plumbing, mechanical and fire related permits are issued separately from the building permit for commercial projects and fees are in addition to those of the building permit. Please refer to the appropriate plumbing, mechanical and fire permit fee schedules (BP-04 *Permit Fee Schedule*) or consult with department staff.

Other considerations

Before you consider purchasing, renting or leasing a site for your business, we encourage you to contact the Departments listed below to help determine what modifications to the building or space may be required. An even better option would be to schedule a Pre-Application Conference (see BP-26 *Commercial Conference Information and Guidelines*) to arrange a meeting with all of these departments at the same time.

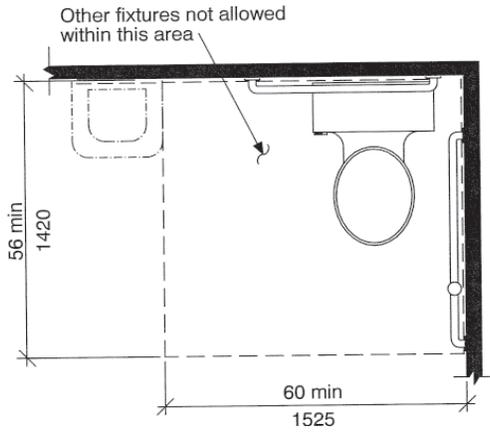
- Department of Building and Planning
(509) 477-3675
- Division of Engineer and Roads
(509) 477-3600
- Spokane Regional Health District
(509) 324-1560

Other brochures that may be helpful

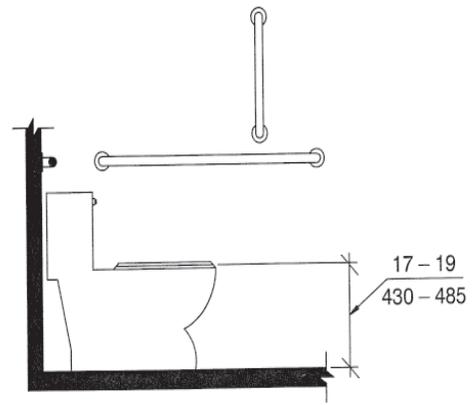
- BP-1 *Commercial Permits*
- BP-4 *Permit Fee Schedule*
- BP-8 *Signs*
- BP-26 *Commercial Conference Information and Guidelines*
- BP-27 *Critical and Hazardous Materials*
- BP-31 *Rules, Regulations, and Red Tape*
- BP-32 *Safety Inspections*
- BP-33 *Commercial Site Plans and Construction Drawings*
- BP-39 *Addressing*
- BP-40 *Information Directory*
- BP-41 *Commercial Change of Use*
- BP-48 *Non-Residential Energy Code*
- BP-52 *Permit Processing Time Savers*
- BP-53 *Project Planning Checklist*
- BP-55 *Certificate of Occupancy*
- BP-79 *Speculative Buildings and Shell Buildings*

For more information or an appointment contact:

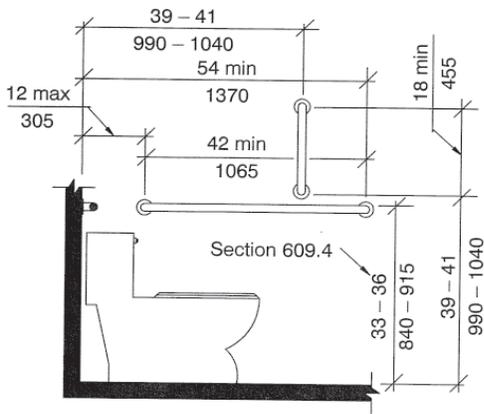
Spokane County Public Works
Department of Building and Planning
1026 W. Broadway Avenue
Spokane, WA 99260-0050
(509) 477-3675 bp@spokanecounty.org
<http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp>



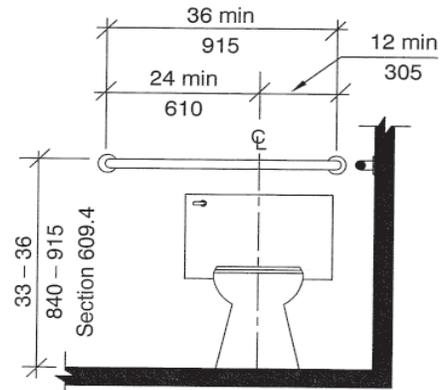
Size of Clearance for Water Closet



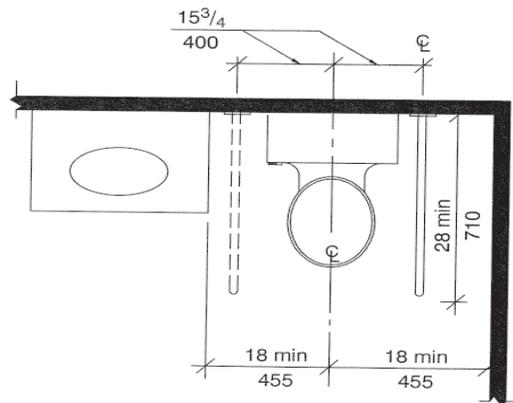
Water Closet Height



Side Wall Grab Bar for Water Closet



Rear Wall Grab Bar for Water Closet



Swing-up Grab Bar for Water Closet

Excerpted from "ICC/ANSI A117.1 - 2003 Accessible and Usable Building and Facilities"

Please note that while every effort is made to assure the accuracy of the information contained in this brochure it is not warranted for accuracy. This document is not intended to address all aspects or regulatory requirements for a project and should serve as a starting point for your investigation. For detailed information on a particular project, permit, or code requirement refer directly to applicable file and/or code/regulatory documents or contact the appropriate division or staff.