

Coaching Appointments – Commercial Building Code

Coaching appointments for commercial building code are meetings intended for prospective tenants, design professionals, and builder/contractors who have code questions prior to submittal of a permit application. After meeting with your Building Reviewer, you can proceed with completing your drawings or applying for a building permit application. Meeting with a reviewer in advance may help you avoid issues or design changes later, when they can be more expensive. You should come prepared with a full description of your scope of work and any specific questions you have regarding the code. You should have a basic understanding of building code and the applicable zoning and off-site improvement requirements. This meeting is not a substitute for hiring a professional for your project.

Can I get a permit after my appointment?

If your scope of work and the plans can be reviewed during the appointment, it is possible that a permit can be issued immediately following your appointment. If additional review or other approvals are needed at the end of your appointment, you will be provided guidance on next steps. If your plan cannot be approved during the appointment but has all the necessary components to begin review, you may submit an application with a permit specialist and in order for staff to continue review outside of the meeting.

Minor work may be eligible to receive a permit after a coaching appointment subject to the Building Reviewer's approval. Eligible permits cannot be:

1. Associated with a building addition, land use permit, change of use or occupancy, structural review, site work, or larger project.
2. Equal to total construction costs of more than 10% of the existing building value per the most recent ICC Table.
3. Related to a brewery, distillery, or marijuana-related business – these types of uses often require additional reviewers or review time.

Eligible permits:

1. Plumbing or mechanical repair, relocation, replacement.
2. Interior/exploratory demolition, non-structural
3. Reroof (with prior courtesy inspection in the case of an overlay)
4. Whole building or structure demolition total cumulative structure square footage of less than 12,000 sf.

Why do I need to schedule an appointment?

Commercial projects tend to be complex and often require additional time and information to review, which is why your plans and scope of work are important to provide when you schedule your appointment. This will allow staff time to prepare to answer questions and have a more efficient use of your time at the meeting.

Can I see any reviewer?

In most cases, you may schedule an appointment to see any building code reviewer. However, if you have already been working with a particular building reviewer, let us know when you schedule your appointment. It is best to see the same reviewer for consistency on a particular project. If you request to see a different reviewer who is not familiar with the project, he/she may have little or no history on what was previously discussed and must re-learn your project proposal. This may raise new questions and ultimately slows down your review.

Be sure to keep your own notes of any final code interpretations or agreements, with the Building Reviewer's name and date of your Coaching appointment. Then, submit these notes for reference along with your drawings and other required documents with your building permit application.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

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Before you schedule an appointment

By phone, email, or walk-in services:

- ✓ Check with a Land Use Planner that the proposed use is permissible and does not require any Land Use discretionary permits.
- ✓ Check with a Site Development reviewer if you are proposing any paving, gravel, parking lot striping, road work, sanitary sewer work, food/beverage production or service, marijuana-related businesses, or other work outside the building.
- ✓ Review applicable codes and Tip Sheets.
- ✓ Prepare required drawings and specific questions you have related to building/fire code.

What information will I need to provide to schedule an appointment?

- First and last name
- Address of project site
- Full description of project / scope of work
- Phone number (mobile preferred)
- E-mail address
- Specific questions related to building/fire code
- Associated permit numbers, if any
- Flash drive or CD of review documents, such as:
 - Site Plan
 - Floor Plan
 - Drawing Details
 - Associated Calculations

See review [checklists](#) online at [TacomaPermits.org](#).

Do I need to hire a design professional to prepare my plans?

We strongly recommend that a design professional is hired to prepare your plans. Many projects will require a stamp and signature by a professional designer, architect, or engineer who is licensed in the State of Washington (i.e. projects with a valuation of \$50,000 or more, multifamily buildings of 5 units or more, buildings of over 4,000 sf, or if required by the Building Official).

How do I schedule an appointment?

You may request a coaching meeting through your [Tacoma Permits \(ACA\)](#) account or in person at Planning and Development Services. If you are not familiar with Tacoma Permits (ACA) or have not created an account, it is recommended to do so using the [Getting Started](#) guide which is available on [TacomaPermits.org](#).

What happens if I need to cancel my appointment?

Please contact your reviewer by email or phone if you need to cancel. He/she can assist with rescheduling for the next available date.

In the event that your appointment needs to be canceled due to extenuating circumstances (such as staff illness or emergency), you will be contacted by the email address or phone number that you provided when you scheduled the appointment. All efforts will be made to reschedule your appointment as soon as possible for the next available time.

What if my project is related to another permit?

If your permit is related to another permit (such as, deferred submittal, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, demolition), you may be required to schedule an appointment with the staff who reviewed the original or “parent” permit. If an appointment was scheduled with a different reviewer, you may be rescheduled to a different date/time and will be notified by phone or email. Deferred submittals have the same timeline for review as the parent permit.

Additional Resources

[Tip Sheets](#)

- B-102 Tenant Improvements
- G-105 Restaurants
- G-136 Parking Lot Changes
- G-139 Demolition Permits
- G-205 Drawings
- G-230 Electronic File Standards
- G-310 Pre-Application Meetings
- G-565 Marijuana-Related Businesses



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