

When Plans Submittal Is Required

State of Tennessee
State Fire Marshal's Office
Department of Commerce and Insurance
Division of Fire Prevention
Codes Enforcement Section
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A building plans submittal is required to the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) sealed by a Tennessee registered architect or engineer based on a building's occupancy type, location, and whether the project scope meets the definition of Construction. [Rule 0780-02-03-.02 Submission of Plans]

Occupancies Anywhere in Tennessee

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations anywhere in Tennessee:

1. Educational Occupancies, (schools) kindergarten through the 12th grade
2. Day Care Occupancies, (child and adult) licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS)
3. State owned or leased projects, (state office buildings, universities, colleges, etc.) Exception: Facilities leased by the state located in a jurisdiction of local government that has obtained the exemption authorized by Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-120-101(b)(2). [Rules 0780-02-03-.02(1)(d), Effective 06-27-2010]
4. State agency licensing, when the agency identifies through law or rule that the SFMO must perform fire inspections. (TN Department of Human Resources (DHS), TN Department of Children's Services (DCS))

Additional Occupancies Outside Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations for the following occupancies when they are located outside of an exempt jurisdictions.

- Assembly Occupancy of 300 or more.
- Business Occupancy three or more story buildings.
- Residential Occupancies, except 1 & 2 Family Dwellings and Townhouses.
- Correctional Facilities
- Enclosed Malls
- High-Hazard Industrial (2012 IBC Groups H-1 and H-2 only; Excluding Storage)

Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO formally delegates codes enforcement to local jurisdictions who have demonstrated that it is adequately performing its building codes enforcement program. These jurisdictions employ staff to perform plans reviews and field inspections for buildings and structures to ensure fire and building code compliance that they have adopted by ordinance. [TCA 68-120-101(b)(2)] A SFMO audit team performs quality audits of each Exempt Jurisdiction once every three years. [Rule 0780-02-19-.04] Exempt Jurisdictions: <https://www.tn.gov/commerce/fire/codes-enforcement.html>

Definition of Construction

Use the definition of Construction to determine whether a proposed project scope of work would require a plans submittal. [Rule 0780-02-03-.01 Definitions] The term "Construction" does not include excavation or site preparation. Construction means:

- The erection of a new building
- An addition to an existing building
- A change of occupancy or occupancy group
- An alteration that alters the exit arrangement
- Fire resistive assemblies
- Type of Construction
- Installation of fire suppression system
- Installation of fire detection systems
- Installation of fuel fired equipment

No Review Letter

The SFMO may issue a "No Review Letter" for projects that, because of the type of work involved does not meet the definition of Construction. To receive a No Review Letter, the owner/designer must submit adequate information to make a determination along with the required fee through the SFMO standard submittal process. The department's field inspector assigned to a project's county will be alerted to the new work and may visit the project site to insure compliance.

The submittal package shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Name, mailing address, and phone number for individual submitting request
- Project name, complete mailing address, county, and occupancy type
- Owner representative's name and phone number for contact purposes so that a DSFM field inspector has access to the building
- Written detailed description of the work to be performed
- Floor plan, sealed by a designer, of each floor level with the use of each space showing what type and where the work is located in the building
- Show size dimensions of spaces and building size when occupant load determinations are required; show occupant load for any assembly space