

How to Obtain a Permit for Fire Sprinkler Systems

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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This Information Bulletin describes the procedures for obtaining a permit to install a fire sprinkler system per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 13 or 13R Standards in non-residential or multi-dwelling unit buildings. See Information Bulletin 124 for fire sprinkler system permitting requirements for single-family homes, duplexes or townhomes.

I. Submittal Requirements

The following plans and documents shall be submitted when applying for a fire sprinkler permit for non-residential or multi-dwelling unit buildings.

A. Forms/Documents

PDF copies of the following forms and documents must be submitted at the time of Permit application.

1. Project Contacts Information Form

A Project Contacts Information Form (DS-345) must be submitted with all projects.

2. Fire Permit Fee Worksheet

The Fee Worksheet is located on Page 4 of Information Bulletin 506, Fire Permit Fees.

3. Hydrant Flow Request Form/Water Supply Information

For projects located within the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department water service district, provide a completed Hydrant Flow Request Form (DS-160) obtained from the City of San Diego Development Services staff within the last 6 months. For new developments with no existing water supply infrastructure provide a copy of the approved water study for the development. See Information Bulletin 180, How to Obtain Hydrant Flow Data for further information.

For projects located in areas served by Water Districts other than the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department, provide water supply information obtained from the Water District serving the project site that is no more than 6 months old.

4. High-Piled Combustible Storage Form DS-164

For buildings that will have high-piled combustible storage, a copy of the approved DS-164 form must be electronically affixed to the plans.

B. Plans

1. Tenant Improvement (TI) Projects

Projects involving the replacement, movement or addition of up to 20 sprinkler drops or armovers in an existing system will not require submittal of sprinkler plans provided that the design meets the conditions specified in Sections II and III of Form DS-161, Affidavit for Fire Sprinkler Alterations or Tenant Improvements (TIs), and the existing system is an NFPA 13 or 13R system protecting one of the following spaces or hazards:

- a. Light hazard occupancies.
- b. Laboratories which are classified as a Group B Occupancy per the California Building Code.
- c. Retail sales floor areas (storage areas are outside the scope of the affidavit).
- d. Commercial kitchens.
- e. The addition of up to two dry-type sprinklers.
- f. Relocation of sprinklers fed by existing flexible sprinkler hose, new flexible sprinkler hose is not allowed.

The Architect, Mechanical or Fire Protection Engineer, Class B General Contractor, or C-16 Sprinkler Contractor may complete Form DS-161, as specified in the form. A PDF copy of the affidavit form must be provided at the time of Permit application. All other TI projects must provide plans as described for All Other Fire Sprinkler Systems in the section below.

2. All Other Fire Sprinkler Systems

For all projects not meeting the Fire Sprinkler Affidavit requirements discussed in the previous section, Fire Sprinkler System plans showing shop level details of the system to be installed must be provided with the Fire Suppression Permit application. Conceptual design plans or plans intended for bid purposes only will not be accepted or reviewed. These plans must be prepared by the Installing Contractor or by a California licensed Fire Protection or Mechanical Engineer. The plans shall provide the following information, as applicable:

- a. All information required in NFPA 13, Chapter 28, Plans and Calculations.
- b. For deferred submittals, the associated building permit number.
- c. Stamp and signature by the designer of record (installing contractor or California licensed Fire Protection or Mechanical Engineer). The designer's name and license number must be clearly provided on the plans. The designer of record must be responsible for the entire project design.
- d. Type of construction of the building per the California Building Code.
- e. Location and make/model of cross-connection control device.
- f. Number of sprinklers to be added, modified or relocated.
- g. The type of existing and proposed sprinklers.
- h. The existing system design (i.e. hazard classification, density and design area).
- a. The location and settings of all Pressure Reducing Valves (PRVs).
- j. The location of fire access roadways for sprinkler plans for new buildings or additions to existing buildings.
- k. For new systems where the onsite private fire service underground is Permitted separately (see Information Bulletin 181), provide the project and permit numbers for the approved Fire Underground Permit.

C. Hydraulic Calculations

1. Where Required

Hydraulic calculations are required for all new projects. TI projects do not require hydraulic calculations unless one of the following is proposed:

- a. A new cross-connection control device is added or the existing cross-connection device is altered,
- b. The new hazard classification proposed is more restrictive than the original design,
- c. Sprinklers other than standard spray are proposed or required,
- d. New and/or additional flexible connections are proposed, or
- e. Systems deemed by the sprinkler reviewer as needing hydraulic calculations.

2. Details

Provide hydraulic calculations per NFPA 13, Chapter 28, Plans and Calculations for each remote area. Hydraulic calculations shall include all pipe, valves, fittings and other appurtenances from all sprinklers within the hydraulically most remote design area back to the effective point of the water supply information provided by the City of San Diego staff or the Water Authority providing water service to the project site. This will typically be the point of connection for the fire hydrant closest to the project site.

3. Fire Pumps

Where a fire pump is installed as a part of the fire sprinkler system to boost the system pressure, the fire pump performance curve shall be included in each calculation. Using separate supply calculations to shift the effective supply point to the discharge side of the fire pump will not be an acceptable alternative to including the fire pump performance curve as an integral part of each calculation.

4. Sway Brace Calculations

Provide sway brace calculations using the form from NFPA 13, Chapter 18, Installation Requirements for Seismic Protection.

5. Manufacturer's Data Sheets

Provide one copy of manufacturers' data sheets for all portions of the sprinkler system including, but not limited to:

1. Pipe, fittings and valves.
2. Hangers and sway bracing.
3. Sprinklers.
4. Cross-connection control device.
5. Fire pumps, jockey pumps and controllers (where applicable).

II. Other Requirements

The installation of the fire service underground requires a separate Right-of-Way (ROW) permit in addition to the required Fire Underground Permit. See Information Bulletin 166, How to Obtain a Permit for Water, Sewer or Fire Service. The installation of a cross-connection control device must be in accordance with Information Bulletin 113, How to Obtain Approval for Cross-Connection Controls. The device must be located on private property as close to the property line as possible or have Cross-Connection Control Section approval for an alternate location.

III. Review Process Online

The following review options are available for Fire Sprinkler projects. Submit these projects electronically through the online portal. Select Deferred Fire Submittal for projects that are deferred to Accela projects (PRJ-xxxxxx). Select the Fire Permit record for standalone fire permits and permits deferred to PTS projects (PTS-0xxxxx). Failure to identify that your project is deferred to a building permit, or the correct building permit, will delay review and issuance of your project.

A. Rapid Review

The following types of projects can be reviewed as a Rapid Review project:

1. Tenant improvements no larger than 10,000 square feet for occupancy classifications Group B, M, F and S.
2. Fire sprinkler affidavits (DS-161).

B. Submitted Review

All other projects must be submitted for plan review. Options for service include Standard and Express Plan Check.

IV. Fees

Plan Check fees for standalone projects and projects deferred to PTS projects must be paid before the review is started. Fees for projects deferred to Accela projects must be paid after the review has been completed but before Permit issuance. Fire sprinkler fees will be charged based on Information Bulletin 506, Fire Permit Fees. For your convenience, DSD offers online payments. Payment may also be made in person by cash, check, debit card, Visa, or MasterCard credit card. Checks shall be drawn in the exact amount on US banks and made payable to the "City Treasurer."

Express Plan Check is available for Fire Permits upon payment of an Express Plan Check administrative fee plus 1.5 times the regular plan check fee. The Express fee includes rechecks. Express Plan Check provides review times 40% - 50% faster than standard review times.

Please note that plan check fees and other administrative fees are non-refundable. See the Refund Policy noted within Refund Application Form DS-721 for additional refund information.

V. Inspections

See Information Bulletin 120, Project Inspections, for information regarding project inspections for non-residential and multi-dwelling unit fire sprinkler systems. Note that a Fire Sprinkler Final is required for all buildings with fire sprinkler systems regardless of the number of fire sprinklers added or relocated.

Reference Table

- San Diego Municipal Code, ([SDMC](#))
- [Building Permit Template](#) [PDF](#)
- [California Building Code \(CBC\)](#)
- [Project Submittal Manual](#) [PDF](#)
- Project Contacts Information Form, [DS-345](#) [PDF](#)
- Owner-Builder Verification, [DS-3042](#) [PDF](#)
- [Information Bulletin 118](#) [PDF](#), Construction Changes to Approved Plans
- [Information Bulletin 122](#) [PDF](#), How to Prepare Site Plan and Vicinity Map
- [Information Bulletin 120](#) [PDF](#), Project Inspections
- [Information Bulletin 188](#) [PDF](#), Deferred Submittals
- [Information Bulletin 501](#) [PDF](#) , Fee Schedule Construction Permits – Structures
- [Information Bulletin 719](#) [PDF](#), Phased Projects
- [DS-721](#), Refund Application Form