

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Criteria for Consistently Prepared Applicant (CPA) Submittals

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If you are a Seattle DCI construction permit applicant who continually completes and provides all required submittal documents for a specific project—including research materials to substantiate your design assumptions—you may qualify to be a "Consistently Prepared Applicant" (CPA) which makes you eligible for incentives that can streamline your application process. The benefit is being able to schedule an appointment by phone or online without having to visit Seattle DCI to have your application screened.

The CPA program was developed in 2000 to take advantage of the fact that having consistently prepared applicants allows Seattle DCI's technical experts more time to review applications, which in turn produces better quality applications for subsequent reviews.

CPA RATING SYSTEM

When a CPA has an intake appointment the submittal is given a rating of "prepared" or "not prepared." The rating system is based on the last 5 "contacts" that the applicant has had and uses a scale of 0 to 100%.

For example, if the applicant's last 5 contacts with Seattle DCI were all rated as "prepared" (as defined in the next section), the rating would be 100% (5 out of 5 = 100%). Whereas if the last 5 contacts had only 3 of the 5 rated as "prepared," that applicant would then have a rating of 60%.

An applicant can safeguard their CPA status by maintaining a rating of 80% or better and thereby be considered in "good standing."

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PREPARED APPLICANT

The characteristics that define a "prepared," as opposed to a "not prepared," applicant are detailed below.

1. Providing Completed Forms

An applicant in "good standing" will know what basic forms are needed at intake and will present those forms complete and ready for review at the start of the intake appointment. These forms are identified in the Seattle DCI checklists and standards that pertain to a given project type. If you have any questions about whether a form is required, please contact a Permit Specialist in person at the ACS or through the online Land Use Q&A at <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/LUQnA/?Type=1>. If you arrive at the appointment without the appropriate forms completed, you will be rated as "unprepared" for that appointment.

2. Providing a Complete SDCI Coversheet

It is expected that all relevant items on the Seattle DCI coversheet be filled out or addressed, as defined by the Seattle DCI checklists and/or standards that pertain to a given project type. If you arrive at the appointment without the coversheet completed, you will be rated as "unprepared" for that appointment.

3. Providing Complete Plans

"Complete plans" show all details relevant to explaining the scope of work and how that work is to be done, as defined by the Seattle DCI checklists and standards that pertain to a given project type. Plans deemed incomplete at the intake appointment will result in a "not prepared" rating in most cases. Please see item 10, the "Meet-Us-at-the-Table Rule."

4. Having the Correct # of Plans

The applicant is expected to bring in the correct number of plans specified in the Seattle DCI checklists and standards for a given project type. If you arrive at the appointment without the correct number of plan sets (or are unable to make additional copies of the plan sets during the appointment), you will be rated as "unprepared" for that appointment.

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5. Ability to Pay

For applications in the paper process, the applicant must be able to pay the required fees at intake. If you arrive at the appointment without the ability to pay the permit fees, you will be rated as "unprepared" for that appointment.

For electronic applications through Seattle DCI's project portal, applicants have two business days to pay. If you don't pay by then, we may reject your application.

6. Timeliness

The applicant is expected to be on time when scheduled appointments have been made. Not being on time reduces Seattle DCI's ability to facilitate a successful application intake. Seattle DCI reserves the right to cancel any scheduled appointment if the applicant is more than 15 minutes late and has not made prior arrangements with the Department. Lateness will result in a rating of "not prepared" for the appointment. Applicants who cancel appointments without 24 hours prior notice will also receive a "not prepared" rating. Applicants using Seattle DCI's online project portal must upload all documents by 7:00 a.m. so Seattle DCI can review the application for completeness in the morning.

7. Reference/Research

We expect a CPA will research a project prior to intake—primarily for permit history on the specific address to provide documentation that supports the design assumptions. The Seattle DCI Microfilm Library on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower is the most common research source.

The diligence an applicant demonstrates in trying to obtain complete and correct information is taken into consideration. Due to Seattle DCI's sometimes complicated processes, missing microfilm information, and the fact that all the "right" questions are not always asked at the "right" time, assumptions are sometimes made that may be wholly or partly inaccurate. If the applicant can provide documentation that the inaccuracy was based on one of the above-mentioned factors—or if staff can research the cumulative record or other files that indicate that the applicant has made a good-faith effort to obtain the necessary information—the applicant will not receive a "not prepared" rating. All research documentation should be provided at the appointment.

8. Technical Reports

These reports could be required by an inspector, reviewer, planner, or by Seattle DCI's requirements.

Any that have been identified prior to the intake as required for an application should be provided at the time of the intake appointment. Failure to provide a required report will result in a "not prepared" rating.

9. Project Stoppers

Items that might cause major redesign or just cannot be done as presented due to non-conformance with code requirements of which the applicant is reasonably expected to be aware are called "Project Stoppers." Generally speaking, projects which cannot be taken in due to a required redesign related to basic code standards will result in a "not prepared" rating for the appointment. If the related code standards are complicated, or subject to multiple interpretations, it may not result in a "not prepared" rating.

10. "Meet-Us-at-the-Table Rule"

Seattle DCI expects that a prepared applicant will present plans or other material which contain complete, review-ready information. Seattle DCI has made a commitment to staff intake appointments with sufficiently expert personnel to determine whether an applicant has been successful in this effort and to facilitate correction when the applicant has not been entirely successful.

If an applicant has the expertise and decision making authority at the intake appointment to redline or otherwise correct an application during the allotted time, that applicant will not be given a "not prepared" rating. If, however, that expertise or authority is not present in the appointment, or if it is determined that the cumulative effect of the corrections will result in an application too difficult to review efficiently, the applicant will be rated as "not prepared."

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the qualifying for CPA status, contact our Applicant Services Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Avenue, (206) 684-8850.

Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of Seattle DCI **Tips, forms** and **codes** are available on the "Tools & Resources" page of our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci. Paper copies of these documents are available from our Public Resource Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave. in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.