

Seattle Permits

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

Standard Plans

Updated July 28, 2022

This Tip is intended to provide an overview of standard plans, including limitations and design options. This Tip also provides an overview of the application process when you are using a standard plan.

A **standard plan** is a set of construction plans that have been pre-approved because they comply with applicable building and energy codes. Standard plans are intended for use on two or more sites. The advantages of a standard plan include:

- Construction requirements are known prior to submittal
- Once the standard plan is established, you can have reduced permit fees
- A faster plan review process

Note: Approved standard plans remain valid until new relevant codes are adopted; they do not have the standard expiration date of 18 months after approval as building permits do. Whenever the City makes revisions to the Seattle Residential Code (SRC), Seattle Building Code (SBC), or Seattle Energy Code (SEC), we will require a new standard plan application and approval process.

LIMITATIONS

Standard plans are generally limited to new construction of:

- Detached one- and two-family dwellings three stories or less (SRC)
- Multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) three stories or less (SRC)
- Accessory structures such as detached garages, small pole buildings, etc.
- Accessory swimming pools
- Detached Accessory Dwelling Units (DADUs) that are accessory to a single-family residence

- Other project types may be approved for standard plans on a case-by-case basis. For further information, contact an Engineering & Technical Codes Manager. You can find their contact information at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/contact-us/contact-us---director-and-managers.

ESTABLISHING A STANDARD PLAN

A standard plan may be established by three paths:

1. You may apply to establish a standard plan before having selected a specific site where you want to use your plan. SDCI will conduct two complete reviews of your application. You generally will need to use the standard plan at least four times for this submittal option to be cost effective.
2. You may apply for a site-specific permit and to establish a standard plan concurrently. SDCI will conduct two complete reviews of your application.
3. You may use a plan previously approved under the current code, by SDCI, as a basis towards establishing a standard plan. Your second application may include a site-specific construction component that will receive a second complete review by SDCI.

DESIGN OPTIONS

You may include design options within the context of the standard plan. The scope and number of these options must be reasonable and could include plan reversals, alternate roof lines, bay window options, and variations in foundation wall heights or other similar alternatives without significant structural changes. You must include any required structural changes, including the lateral load resisting system, in each option. SDCI will discuss specific approval of the options with you. Our approval is somewhat dependent on the clarity with which you present the options on the plans.

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Wind and Seismic Provisions: Standard plans are limited to those structures within the scope of the SRC. When a structure is three stories or does not meet all the SRC prescriptive wall bracing requirements, then you need an engineered design for the lateral elements of the structure. However, the engineered design criteria may vary, depending on the site location, for wind exposure and seismic ground motion accelerations. Your lateral design should address the most conservative assumptions in Seattle, or you may only be able to use the standard plan on those sites meeting the criteria in your plan.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

To establish a standard plan, you should apply online at <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/portal>.

You will need an application intake appointment to establish a standard plan. Your plan sets must include foundation, floor and framing plans, structural sections, building elevations and all code-related notes and details. Multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) must be stamped by a Washington state architect or structural engineer. If you are using a plan previously approved by SDCI to establish a standard plan, you will need to provide a copy of that approved plan set. View both the **Screening Standards and Checklists for New Single Family** or **New (Small) Multi-Family** online at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits.

Swimming pool standard plans must be stamped by a Washington state structural engineer and must include complete structural notes, including soil assumptions, SEC notes, and structural calculations.

A standard plan application will be checked by two reviewers (only one additional review for previously approved plans) and you are expected to resubmit a permanently corrected plan set (no redlines). When we approve a standard plan, we will assign a new unique record number to the standard plan, and you will need to reference this number whenever submitting an application to use the standard plan.

Establishing a Standard Plan without a Construction Component

You may establish a standard plan without a specific site. A preliminary application, pre-application site visit, and site plans are not required when the application does not include a construction component.

Establishing a Standard Plan with a Construction Component

You may establish a standard plan and apply for a construction permit concurrently. When your application includes a construction component, in addition to the submittal requirements above, all site-specific and construction permit related submittal requirements apply, as detailed in the **Screening Standards and Checklists**.

SUBSEQUENT REGULAR SUBMITTALS

Once a standard plan is approved and on file with SDCI, a plan set identical to those in the standard plan on file and all site specific and construction permit related submittal requirements apply, as detailed in the **Screening Standards and Checklists**. Any of the previously approved options used should be clearly identified on the plans, with unused options struck-through.

Subsequent submittals may use any qualified SDCI application process. When you establish the original standard plan, you must either be the applicant for an individual construction permit using it or provide written permission to another construction permit applicant to use your standard plan.

We will generally provide expedited screening, zoning and ordinance/structural plan review for standard plan submittals. Site problems, discretionary land use reviews, or zoning issues will likely delay processing of your application.

SUBSEQUENT PRE-APPROVED DADU SUBMITTALS

To qualify to submit using a DADU Standard Plan, you must:

- Use 1 of the 10 pre-approved DADU Standard Plan designs located on the ADUniverse website at aduniverse-seattlecitygis.hub.arcgis.com
- Propose construction of the pre-approved DADU on a site that has no Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs)
- Propose construction of the DADU on a site designated in a neighborhood residential zone
- Disturb less than 750 square feet of earth
- Provide a complete application that is ready to be routed for review

FEES

The fees for establishing a standard plan are based upon a multiple of SDCI's base fees, as specified in the Fee Subtitle. The Fee Subtitle is available on SDCI's "Fees" page at [www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/fees](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/fees) or from SDCI's Public Resource Center, (206) 684-8467.

Access to Information

Links to Tips and commonly used forms are available on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci.