

# Seattle Permits

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

## Standard Plans

Updated July 26, 2019

A **standard plan** is a set of construction plans pre-approved as conforming to applicable building and energy codes and intended for use on two or more sites. The advantages of a standard plan include:

- Construction requirements are known prior to submittal.
- Once established, reduced permit fees.
- A faster plan review process.

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

### 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
- 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](http://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. An applicant may apply to establish a standard plan before having a specific site selected for use of the plan. The application will receive two complete reviews by SDCI. This submittal option generally results in cost effectiveness when the standard plan has been used at least four times.
2. An applicant may apply for a site-specific permit and to establish a standard plan concurrently. The application will receive two complete reviews by SDCI.
3. An applicant may use a plan previously approved, under the current code, by SDCI as a basis towards establishing a standard plan. The second application may include a site-specific construction component and will receive a second complete review by SDCI.

### DESIGN OPTIONS

An applicant 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. Each option must include any required structural changes, including the lateral load resisting system. Specific approval of options will be discussed with the reviewer and is somewhat dependent on the clarity with which options are presented on the plans.

**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 prescriptive wall bracing requirements of the SRC, then the lateral elements of the structure require an engineered design. However, the engineered design criteria may vary, depending on the site location, for wind exposure and seismic ground motion accelerations. The lateral design should address the most conservative assumptions in Seattle, or the standard plan may be limited in use to those sites meeting the criteria.



## APPLICATION MATERIALS

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

An application intake appointment is required in order to establish a standard plan. 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 in order 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](http://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 the applicant is expected to resubmit a permanently corrected plan set (no redlines). When a standard plan is approved, a new unique record number will be assigned to the standard plan, and the applicant will need to reference this number whenever submitting an application to use the standard plan.

### Establishing a Standard Plan without a Construction Component

An applicant 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

An applicant 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 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. The applicant who establishes the original standard plan must either be the applicant for an individual construction permit using it or provide written permission to another construction permit applicant to utilize the standard plan.

Standard plan submittals will generally receive expedited screening, zoning and ordinance/structural plan review, but site problems, discretionary land use reviews, or zoning issues will likely delay processing.

## 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, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave. in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.

## Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of SDCI **Tips** and **commonly used forms** are available on the "Resources" page of our website at <http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/resources>. Paper copies of these documents, as well as additional regulations mentioned in this Tip, 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.