

Seattle Permits

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

Subject-to-Field-Inspection (STFI) Permits

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If you have a simple construction project that does not require extensive plan review, you may be able to speed up your permit application, review, and issuance process by getting a subject-to-field-inspection (STFI) permit. This Tip identifies project types that qualify for the STFI process and highlights the corresponding application requirements.

If you are working on a single family house or duplex, please read Tip 303A, *Common Seattle Residential Code Requirements*. For electrical and over-the-counter mechanical permits, refer to Tip 104, *Getting an OTC (Over-the-Counter) Permit*.

Special Notice Regarding Projects that Involve Removal and Replacement of a Nonconforming Portion of a Structure

We do not consider the removal and reconstruction (replacement) of a portion of a nonconforming structure to be a repair. We will require proof that your structure was legally constructed under a permit, before issuing your permit. The burden of such proof will be your responsibility.

Prior to applying for a permit, you may want to research previous permits issued for the site in our Microfilm Library, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 5th Ave., (206) 233-5180.

You may need a site inspection before we issue your permit.

Projects that Qualify as STFI

- **Demolition** of a building proposed on a site that is not located in certain environmentally critical areas (ECAs), where the project does not require other land use permits, or where the removed structure does not create shoring needs.
- **Roof repair** to restore the roof to its original configuration (see SRC Sec. R105.2 item 10). We may require photographs showing the extent of the roof damage (see SRC Section R907 for roofing repair requirements). You don't need a permit to replace roofing materials and siding that don't involve structural changes. We may not issue a permit for structures that have been built without a permit.
- **Foundation repair and replacement** where the foundation is not designed as a retaining wall, where its height does not exceed 4 feet from the bottom of the footing, where there is no change in height and location of the structure's footprint, and where the project is not located in an ECA. You must provide photographs showing the extent of the damage. (Note: we require plan review for foundation repair and replacement with pin piles, and therefore we cannot process that as a STFI).
- **Structural alterations** to existing single family and duplex structures (R-3). We allow openings in load-bearing walls if these walls support only one story above and roof loads, and they have a maximum structural beam span of 14 feet (30 feet if a manufactured truss is used).
- **Non-structural interior alterations in single family and duplex structures** (R-3) typically qualify for a STFI. (Note: we require plan review to convert uninhabited attic storage area into a livable space, and therefore we cannot process it as a STFI.)
- **Non-structural interior alterations** (tenant improvements) in commercial spaces qualify for a STFI if the area of all work is not more than 4,500 square feet. These alterations must not change the number of exits or change the path of travel or



distance to exits. See the Multifamily/Commercial Buildings/STFI checklist at <http://seattle.gov/dpd/permits/forms/> for additional eligibility requirements. Before we can issue a STFI permit, you will be required to provide proof that the structure was legally constructed and that you are using it as legally established under a previous permit.

- **Repairs to damaged buildings** to restore them back to their original configuration. For structures subject to the Seattle Residential Code (SRC), the value of the repairs cannot exceed 60 percent of the building's value. For structures subject to the Seattle Building Code (SBC), the value of the repairs cannot exceed 30 percent of the estimated replacement cost of the building. Where the value of the repairs exceeds 10 percent of the estimated replacement cost of the building, the structural repairs must be designed by a structural engineer. If the field inspector determines that the damage is too extensive to qualify for a STFI, we will require full plan review. We require photographs showing the extent of the damage.
- **Ground level one-story additions** to existing single-family and duplex residential structures (R-3) only. Additions must be 750 square feet or less in area, with a maximum structural beam span of 14 feet* (30 feet if you use manufactured trusses). Openings in bearing walls are limited to supporting one story above and roof loads. Additions must also meet prescriptive Energy Code (Energy Code Chapter 4) requirements and prescriptive ventilation requirements of the Mechanical Code.

**For garage door headers the limit is 16 feet.*
- **Detached accessory structures** to single-family and duplex (R-3) occupancies, limited to 750 square feet in area and with structural spans of less than 14 feet (30 feet if you use manufactured trusses).
- **Rockeries** not used as a retaining wall and not on an environmentally critical area site, designed according to our prescriptive rockery design (refer to Tip 321, *Rockeries: Prescriptive Design and Installation Standards*).
- **Dormer additions** to single-family and duplex (R-3) occupancies when plans are prepared by a licensed architect or engineer. Maximum width is 14 feet with a maximum of 200 square feet of new usable floor area. Dormers must be physically independent from any existing dormers, or the total overall width will be counted toward the 14

feet maximum width. Please note: you need a plan review for dormer additions creating a new floor for habitable living space and converting an existing uninhabited attic into living/habitable space.

General Plan Information that May be Required to Determine if Your Project Qualifies as STFI

1. SITE PLAN (2 copies)

You need to submit a site plan when you change the exterior envelope of your structure. Your site plan must show the location of all structures on the site, to representative scale, and identify the location of the work to be performed relative to existing conditions and property lines. You should call out the exterior dimensions of the property and all structures and the distance from all property lines to the structure at its closest point. (See Tip 103, *Site Plan Requirements*, Tip 220, *Lot Coverage, Height and Yard Standards for Homes in Single Family Zones*, and Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single Family and Two-Unit Dwellings*.)

■ STFI Projects that Require a Site Plan:

- Ground level one-story additions
- Detached accessory structures
- Rockeries
- Dormer additions

2. LOCATION PLAN (1 copy)

You need to submit a location plan when you are proposing the repair and/or minor interior alteration to an existing structure. A location plan is a simple drawing showing the scope and specific location of the proposed work. It must be drawn to a reasonable scale with the following dimensions and details:

- For projects involving repair, you must submit photographs showing the location and extent of damage (including interior and exterior views of the damage when appropriate) with your location plan.
- Show property lines in relation to the portion of the structure where work is being done. When more than two buildings are on the site, each building needs to have a building identifier.
- Show the location of interior walls being altered or relocated in simple plan view.

■ STFI Projects that Require a Location Plan are:

- Demolition
- Roof repair
- Foundation repair and replacement

3. FLOOR PLAN (2 copies)

We require a floor plan when your project involves changes to the interior space of your building. Your floor plan must show the layout and use(s) of the interior space of the building, with the exact location and square footage of work to be done. This drawing must be clearly dimensioned, showing the already existing structure and proposed work.

Existing structural information that you provide should include:

- Direction of framing, size (e.g., 2x8), spacing (16" on center)
- Span (length between supports)
- Spacing (16" on center)
- Location and size of openings
- The path of travel or distance to exits
- Energy code (insulation R-value)
- Glazing u-factor
- Glazing area (as a percent of the floor area)
- Ventilation requirements

Your floor plan must be made available at the site to be verified during inspection. (See Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single Family and Two-Unit Dwellings*.)

■ STFI Projects that Require a Floor Plan:

- Ground level one-story additions
- Detached accessory structures
- Transmitting satellite dish antenna for single family residences
- Rockeries
- Dormer additions

4. ELEVATION DRAWINGS (2 copies)

We require elevations when you propose changes to the exterior envelope of your structure. An elevation shows the height of the structure, including location of the plate and roof ridge in relation to the existing and finished grade. Your elevation must show the relation-

ship of the exterior wall to the slope of grade (sloped driveways and ground elevations). (See Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single-Family and Two-Unit Dwellings*.)

■ STFI Projects that Require Elevation Drawings:

- Ground level one-story additions
- Detached accessory structures
- Transmitting satellite dish antenna for single family residences
- Rockeries
- Dormer additions

5. CROSS SECTION DRAWINGS (1 copy)

Cross sections are required when you propose changes within a wall or roof. A cross section is shown through a typical wall from foundation to roof. You need to specify materials size, spacing, and type. For conditioned space (heated or air-conditioned), show the insulation, foundation, wall section, flooring, ceiling, roofing, ventilation and connections. (See Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single-Family and Two-Unit Dwellings*, Figures 3 and 4.)

Your Responsibilities with STFI Permits

You are responsible for the knowledge of, and compliance with, all applicable codes, including, but not limited to, land use, building, mechanical, electrical, energy, shoreline, critical areas, and grading rules. You will need to sign a statement that acknowledges that you did not receive a complete code review prior to getting your permit. (If you are working on a single family house or duplex, see Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single-Family and Two-Unit Dwellings*.)

The building or mechanical inspector(s) can require you to make any changes to comply with the applicable codes. For example, new windows will need to be removed or replaced if they did not meet the energy code requirements. In addition, we may revoke your permit at the discretion of the building or mechanical inspector should the information provided prove to be inaccurate. You will be required to submit new plans to us for our review if your permit is revoked.

Applying for a STFI Permit

To apply for a STFI permit, please bring your plans and other documents to our Applicant Services

Center (ASC), located on the 20th floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 5th Ave. Remember to bring your property's legal description with the King County Assessor's parcel number. Be ready to pay the full permit fee.

It is important that your plans clearly show all the work you propose to do to avoid processing delays. Once we issue a permit it will be limited to the scope defined and illustrated in the documents you filed.

The following documents, available from the ASC and on our forms website, www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/forms/, may be used in conjunction with STFI permit applications.

- ASC Preliminary Application/Counter Application Form
- Building/Energy Code Checklist
- Contractor Disclosure Form
- Multifamily/Commercial Buildings/STFI Checklist
- Single-Family/Duplex Building/Energy Code Checklist for STFIs
- Preapplication Site Visit Request Form (see below)
- Waste Diversion Plan and Deconstruction and Salvage Assessment

STFI Permits Requiring a Pre- Application Site Visit

A Pre-Application Site Visit (PASV) with an STFI permit is required **only** for properties located in one or more of the following environmentally critical areas:

- Steep slope
- Potential slide
- Riparian corridor
- Wetland
- Known landslide
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Shoreline habitat

Based upon your proposed development and the affected ECA, we may require a reviewed or routed review application in lieu of a STFI.

For STFI permits that do not require a PASV, a site inspector will perform an initial ground disturbance inspection at the start of construction AND after your permit has been issued. You must schedule this inspection **prior** to starting excavation by calling our 24-hour inspection request line, (206) 684-8900. Calls

before 7:00 a.m. should be scheduled for an inspection within 24 hours. When we issue your permit we charge you a fee as a deposit toward anticipated site inspections.

STFI Permits Requiring a Waste Diversion Plan and Deconstruction and Salvage Assessment

In Seattle, you must salvage or recycle asphalt paving, brick, concrete, cardboard, metal, and new gypsum scrap instead of putting it in a disposal container at either your job site or a receiving facility. Our waste diversion plan is required for all projects with an area of work greater than 750 square feet and the diversion plan helps identify which facilities are following Seattle's material ban requirements. Your plan should identify:

- Potential waste materials produced on site
- Where the material will be hauled
- Who the hauler might be

More information on the waste diversion plan can be found at www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changes-tocode/constructiondemolitionwaste/whatwhy/.

For a list of facilities complying with Seattle's facility certification program go to www.seattle.gov/util/forbusinesses/construction/cdwastemanagement/recyclingrequirements/certifiedfacilities/.

More information on the city's material bans is at www.seattle.gov/util/ForBusinesses/Construction/CDWasteManagement/RecyclingRequirements/.

In addition to a waste diversion plan, you need a deconstruction and salvage assessment (DSA) for your project when the area of work is greater than 750 square feet and it involves some or total demolition. The DSA helps identify which of materials specified in your waste diversion plan could be salvaged. If you are taking materials from one project to be used on another project site, or if your project involves partial building removal or alterations, then the DSA can be filled out by the building owner or agent. Whole building removal is more complex so the DSA must be completed by a salvage verifier meeting one of the following requirements:

- An established salvage and reuse retail company
- A licensed contractor specializing in deconstruction
- A demolition company with the knowledge of local and current salvage retail markets.

A list of possible verifying agents may be found through resources such as The Northwest Building Salvage Network: <http://nbsnseattle.org/>.

More information can be found at: www.seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/changestocode/construction-demolitionwaste/whatwhy/.

The waste diversion plan and deconstruction and salvage assessment and waste diversion report forms can be found here: www.seattle.gov/dpd/permits/forms/.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens if my application is rejected?

If we determine your project to be outside the scope of a STFI permit, we will give you detailed information on how to proceed.

2. What happens if there are minor problems with my application?

We will tell you if you need to make corrections. After making the necessary corrections to your plans or support documents, you will need to return all materials as soon as possible to the ASC.

3. How long does it take to get STFI permits issued?

We typically process STFI permits within one working day from the date of filing. This timeframe varies due to volume fluctuations associated with seasonal demands, but we will make every effort to process your application as soon as possible.

4. Can I do work between the time I submit my application and when it is issued?

NO. You can only do work that requires a permit once a permit is issued.

5. Can there be other requirements after my permit is issued?

If our staff determine that your project is beyond the scope of what can be approved as a STFI, we will give you instructions on how to submit additional plans for review.

Post-Final Inspection Approval Documentation Submittal

If your project is greater than 750 square feet, then you should also submit a waste diversion report to Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) within 60 days of our final inspection approval. Your waste diversion plan

and report do not have to match. Your report should identify the actual materials produced from your project, their quantity, who the hauler was, and where the materials were taken for reuse, recycling, and disposal. A copy of the waste diversion report and directions for how you submit it to SPU are found at www.seattle.gov/util/ForBusinesses/Construction/CDWasteManagement/RecyclingRequirements/WasteDiversionReport/.

For technical questions on how to fill out the waste diversion plan or report, please contact Seattle Public Utilities at WasteDiversionReport@seattle.gov.

Projects that Do Not Qualify as a STFI

You cannot get a STFI for the following projects:

- Second story and two-story additions to single-family residences
- Dormer additions creating a new second floor for habitable living space
- Additions to single-family and duplex structure in excess of 750 square feet
- Detached structures accessory to single-family and duplex in excess of 750 square feet
- Pole buildings over 750 square feet and not accessory to a single family residence or duplex (check with our inspector by calling 684-8950)
- Change of use or occupancy group, or change in character of occupancy
- Exterior alterations and additions of any kind to commercial or multifamily structures
- Structural alterations of any kind to commercial or multifamily structures
- Deck additions to single-family residences or duplexes greater than 8 feet above grade
- Deck additions to single-family residences or accessory structures located on a roof or above any enclosed space such as a basement, garage, or shed
- Existing unheated attic to be converted into living/habitable space
- Additions that do not meet the prescriptive requirements of the Seattle Energy Code or prescriptive ventilation requirements of the Mechanical Code
- Initial tenant improvements

- Commercial tenant improvements that modify the exits in commercial occupancies in any way (even relocating an existing exit door)
- Openings in bearing walls supporting more than one story and roof loads, structural beam spans in excess of 14 feet* (for manufactured truss the maximum is 30 foot structural design which requires an engineer's stamp)
 - *For garage door headers the limit is 16 feet.
- Projects that require routing to other City departments
- Relocating a structure on your property
- Projects that require SEPA review (see Director's Rule 29-2015, *State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Exemptions From Environmental Review Requirements When Establishing, Changing or Expanding A Use*)
- Retaining walls
- All wood foundations and foundations using piles, including pipe piles and pin piles
- Amateur radio devices with a height limit over 12 feet from grade or located on the roof of a structure
- Demolishing residential structures without an abatement order, or removal of a residential use requiring a Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance (TRAO) license
- Repairs to a nonconforming structure built without permits
- Alterations, which change the quantity of a dwelling unit(s)
- Add parking spaces except when accessory to a single family dwelling
- Projects that require special inspections (structural or geotechnical)
- Projects that include new impervious surface in a Category 1 peat settlement-prone area
- Construction using atypical materials or methods
- Using a code modification for alternate materials
- Substantial alterations to single-family homes or duplexes, such as major remodels and/or additions that substantially extend the useful physical and/or economic life of a significant portion of the building, or repair of more than 60% of a building (see Seattle Residential Code R107.8.1)

In most cases, a preliminary visit to the ASC can identify conflicts that could otherwise delays your permit.

Other Permit Processing Options

We offer several permit processing options other than STFIs. These options, which require submitting full sets of plans and plan review, include:

- **Expedited:** Permits that require limited or no routing in which the plan review time is less than two hours.
- **Fast Track:** Straightforward new single-family and duplex (R-3) construction projects that have received the certificate of approval from Seattle Public Utilities prior to filing, use standard framing that includes manufactured trusses, and are not subject to soils, environmental, or special drainage reviews.

For additional information on these or other processing options, please visit our Applicant Services Center (ASC), located on the 20th floor of the Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 5th Ave.

Helpful Tips

The following Tips, mentioned earlier in this document, are available online at <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/cams/CamList.aspx>.

- Tip 103, *Site Plan Requirements*
- Tip 104, *Getting an Over-the-Counter Permit*
- Tip 220, *Lot Coverage, Height and Yard Standards for Homes in Single-Family Zones*
- Tip 303, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Single-Family and Two Unit Dwelling Units*
- Tip 321, *Rockeries: Prescriptive Design and Installation Standards*
- Tip 336, *Sustainable Building and Reuse of Building Materials*
- Tip 337, *Demolition Permits*

Code References

- Seattle Building Code
<http://seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/building/>
- Seattle Mechanical Code
<http://seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/mechanical/>
- Seattle Energy Code
<http://seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/energy/overview/>
- Seattle Residential Code
<http://seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/residential/>
- Seattle Land Use and Zoning Code
<http://seattle.gov/dpd/codesrules/codes/landuse/>

Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of Seattle DCI **Tips**, **Director's Rules**, and the **Seattle Municipal Code** are available on the "Tools & Resources" page of our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci. 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.