

Seattle Permits

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

STFI Mechanical Permits for Commercial & Multifamily Residential

Updated December 7, 2023

If you have a simple commercial or multifamily residential mechanical project, you can take advantage of SDCI's streamlined Subject-To-Field-Inspection (STFI) permit process. This Tip summarizes the scope of projects that qualify for the STFI permit process and the information required for permit applications.

Limitation of Scope

It is important to note that our STFI Mechanical permit process is limited in scope. STFI's are not available for projects that involve any work in shoreline and/or historical districts, or that require zoning or land use review that affects the exterior of the building (other than replacement of certain existing equipment as noted below).

You must apply for all mechanical projects requiring plan review using the Seattle Services Portal (<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/>). For more information on mechanical and energy projects requiring plan review, see Tip 415, *Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Mechanical Permits*.

How to Apply

You can apply for an STFI permit for qualifying mechanical work using the Seattle Services Portal. If you have questions and would like to speak to someone regarding submittal documents or the application process you may contact the ASC at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/who-we-are/applicant-services-center.

We require that all applications for STFI mechanical permits include plans depicting the area of work and any other pertinent information and all other required intake forms.

NOTE: If the SDCI inspector determines that the information provided is incomplete or inaccurate, we may revoke the issued STFI permit and require a complete plan review and approval for your project.

To apply for an STFI Mechanical permit you will need a plan set.

Use the Seattle Services Portal (<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/>) to create a Mechanical record number, upload the required submittal documents, and submit your STFI Mechanical record for processing. The Seattle Services Portal Help Center article How to Apply for a Mechanical Permit (<https://seattle.gov.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360014851074-How-to-Apply-for-a-Mechanical-Permit>) provides step-by-step directions on this process if you need additional information.

STFI mechanical record applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. You do not need to make an appointment.

If you have questions about your mechanical project, you can contact us through the Virtual Applicant Services Center at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/who-we-are/applicant-services-center.

Fees

We base permit fees upon the valuation of the work to be performed as established in the current Fee Subtitle, available on our Fees page at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/how-much-will-your-permit-cost. A printed copy may be purchased from our Public Resource Center, (206) 684-8467.

We assess your fees when your permit has been processed. Your fees must be paid before we can issue the permit. Once your fees have been paid your approved plans and permit will be available in your portal. You may pay your permit fees with a credit card through the Seattle Services Portal, with a check, or by setting up an Trust Account with the SDCI Cashier.

Inspection Requirements

You should be aware that you must request and receive all required inspections. All STFI Mechanical permits

www.seattle.gov/sdci



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require that plans, sketches, or relevant shop drawings depicting the area of work and any other pertinent information be made available to the inspector on-site. Include equipment size and efficiency, duct size and type, and Cubic Feet per Minute delivered at each duct termination. You must also have the completed application package available to the inspector on-site. To request a building inspection, submit your request through the Seattle Services Portal (<https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/>) or call our 24-hour Inspection Request Line at (206) 684-8900. Same day inspections are provided for requests made by 7.00 a.m. If you have questions for your inspector call (206) 684-8950.

Work that **does not qualify** for an STFI Commercial/Multifamily residential permit includes:

- Work with a total value, per permit, that is or exceeds \$50,000.
- Work on more than two adjacent floors. (Except Multifamily residential).
- Alterations related to a change of use as defined by the Land Use Code.
- Work in a hospital, clinic, or any lab (medical offices classified as Group B occupancies are okay).
- Work that involves adding new heating capacity to a commercial or multifamily building.
- Work that involves fire dampers or stair and elevator pressurization fans.
- Commercial kitchen hoods.
- Work that requires penetrations through tenant or occupancy separation walls.
- Work that requires penetrations to the exterior walls or roof (other than piping penetration) of any structure or affects the exterior walls or roof in any way.
- Adding electric resistance duct heater, or electric resistance strip heat to existing heat pump.
- Nail-station exhaust system.
- Heat Recovery Ventilation system.

Qualifying for an STFI Commercial Permit

Work that **qualifies** for an STFI Commercial permit must meet the following specifications:

- Ductwork is restricted to revisions and additions to existing duct systems, including registers, diffusers, grille vents, and up to 2 VAV boxes (fan boxes/VAV boxes without new strip heat).

- Replacement of equipment in kind, e.g., same foot print, same fuel type, maximum total of 4 ton/48,000 BTU, weighing less than 400 pounds, within the building interior.

NOTE: You can replace exterior units in kind only if you use existing penetrations through the exterior walls or roof. Heat pump and electric resistance heat are considered different fuel types.

- New cooling-only units *located within the building interior and serving space which was permitted as heated space* and used only for computer, printing, refrigeration rooms, and elevator machine room for supplementary cooling and not for comfort cooling. Equipment is limited to 4 tons/48,000 BTU total and a maximum equipment weight of 400 pounds. Qualifying work is limited to installation of one unit only for each computer/equipment room per application. Seattle Energy Code section C503.2 requires you to bring the building envelope insulation into full compliance before changing the space conditioning.
- Replacement in kind of unit heaters.
- New bathroom exhaust duct connected to an existing, compatible environmental air exhaust system.
- Decorative appliances that meet the requirements of the Seattle Fuel Gas Code sections 602 and 603. The decorative appliance shall not be used as a primary heating device.

Qualifying for an STFI Multifamily Residential Permit

Work that qualifies for an STFI Multifamily Residential permit includes:

- Residential bathroom, kitchen, dryer, laundry room or closet exhaust fans (for type III, IV, or V structures with individual unit venting systems)
 - Each exhaust must terminate at the exterior wall of the structure
 - The project value can exceed \$50,000
- Decorative appliances that meet the requirements of the Seattle Fuel Gas Code sections 602 and 603
 - You shall not use the appliance as a primary heating device
 - You need a separate permit for each dwelling unit

- Heat pumps in townhouses or rowhouses (no limit on unit count) or in any other multifamily buildings with no more than four dwelling units
 - For townhouses, the entire system shall be within the footprint of each dwelling unit
 - You need a separate permit for each dwelling unit
- Furnaces in townhouses or rowhouses (no limit on unit count) or in any other multifamily buildings with no more than four dwelling units
 - For townhouses, the entire system shall be within the footprint of each dwelling unit
 - You need a separate permit for each dwelling unit
- Replacement of heating and cooling equipment in kind, e.g., same foot print, same fuel type, maximum total of 4 ton/48,000 BTU, weighing less than 400 pounds, within the building interior.

NOTE: You can replace exterior units in kind only if you use existing penetrations through the exterior walls or roof. You need a separate permit for each dwelling unit. Heat pump and electric resistance heat are considered different fuel types.

- New cooling-only units *located within the building interior and serving space which was permitted as heated space* and used only for elevator machine room for supplementary cooling and not for comfort cooling. Equipment is limited to 4 tons/48,000 BTU total and a maximum equipment weight of 400 pounds. Qualifying work is limited to installation of one unit only for each computer or equipment room per application. Seattle Energy Code section C503.2 requires you to bring the building envelope insulation into full compliance before changing the space conditioning.

Any work not meeting these requirements **does not qualify** for an STFI permit.

Required Plans for STFI Mechanical Permits

Work that qualifies for issuance as a STFI Mechanical Permit requires the following plans*:

1. For a mechanical project with any exterior component:
 - a. Site Plan showing project site and location of exterior equipment with dimensions to lot lines.
 - b. Floor Plans showing the proposed mechanical work.

c. If equipment is on the roof, elevation drawings showing the height from existing and finished grade to the top of roof and top of proposed equipment.

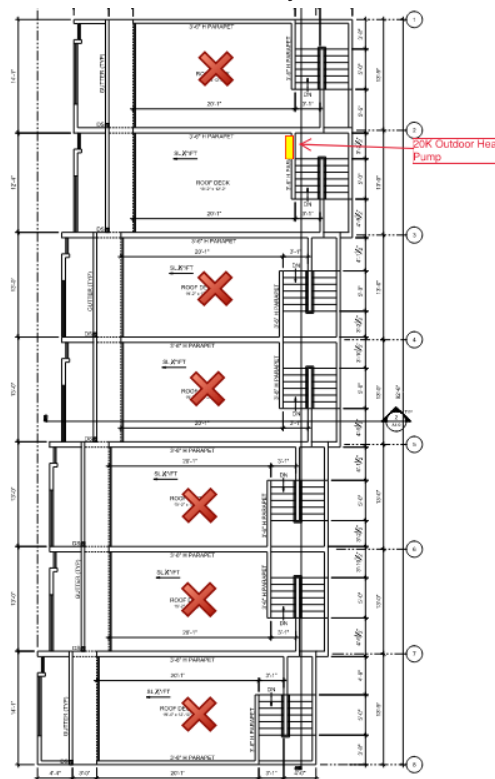
d. When applying for a heat pump/furnace in a Townhouse/Rowhouse/Live work unit please cross out other units as each unit requires its own permit (see example for a building with multiple units).

2. For a mechanical project with no exterior component (interior only)

a. Location Plan

b. Floor Plans showing the proposed mechanical work.

*Pictures do not replace the requirement to submit plans, however, they may be included with plans for reference and context only.



Reference

1. 2018 Seattle Energy Code
2. 2018 Seattle Fuel Gas Code

Access to Information

Links to SDCI Tips, Director's Rules, and Forms are available on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci.