

Seattle Permits

—part of a multi-departmental series on City services & permitting

The Engineering Inspection Process

Updated December 2014

Commonly Asked Questions

When am I ready to call for an inspection?

For all inspections, work must be complete, pretested and ready. If a plan review letter was generated, all items listed on the letter must be resolved before calling for an inspection. A copy of the approved plans and a copy of the plan review letter must be at the job site at the time of inspection.

There are additional criteria that determine your readiness for specific types of inspections:

- **Fire Alarm**
Before calling for inspection, the electrical permit must be signed off by the Department of Planning and Development and the system must be pretested. This includes all auxiliary equipment and the fire alarm controls. The site must be considered “Final Clean”, including but not limited to all carpeting, ceiling tile, drywall and doors in place to conduct alarm audibility tests.
- **Underground Cover**
Underground pipe inspection must occur prior to covering. All tie rodding, etc. must be complete and coated with bituminous or other acceptable corrosion retarding material. Inspection of thrust blocks may occur during or after pouring. Depth and width of the block must be exposed for measurement.
- **Underground Hydro**
Underground may be covered if cover inspection has occurred, however, pressure drops must be within allowable limits. Hydro must occur prior to connection with the building or the City. If a City check valve is present, a “frying pan” must be installed.

- **Underground Flush**
Inspection must occur prior to connecting with the building system.
- **Sprinkler Cover**
You must call for cover inspections prior to installation of drywall or tiles that would interfere with visual access. Any time a sprinkler head is changed or moved, you must have an inspection.
- **Elevator Inspections**
Inspection should not be requested until the electrical and elevator permits have been signed off and the fire alarm system is completely installed.

Whom do I call to request an inspection?

Inspection requests are made by calling (206) 386-1443 or you may call the inspector assigned to your area of the city, if you know their name and/or number. All systems which require a functional test must be pretested prior to the inspection appointment date.

What information do I give when I call to request an inspection?

Your name, your company, your phone number, the inspection address, the Seattle Fire Department Certification. Number of the installer/tester who will be present during the test, the Seattle Fire Department Plan Review Number, the type of inspection, and the number of devices to be tested.

How soon after I call can I expect my inspection?

Time delays may occur due to the availability of inspectors. Overtime inspections, available for a fee, may be requested through this [form \(www.seattle.gov/fire/FMO/inspections/OvertimeInspectionForm.pdf\)](http://www.seattle.gov/fire/FMO/inspections/OvertimeInspectionForm.pdf) and will be filled as inspectors are available. Careful adherence to the procedures outlined in this bulletin will reduce the likelihood of a delay.

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www.seattle.gov/fire



Must I be present when the inspector comes? Do I need approved plans on site?

A representative capable of performing the required tests, capable of providing access to inspection areas, and certified by the Seattle Fire Department must be present. This person must:

- present their certification card to the inspector for verification.
- have a copy of the approved plans.
- have a copy of the plan review letter.

If I need to talk to my inspector, when can he/she be reached?

Scheduling of appointments is done between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. Messages for inspectors may be left at any time by calling (206) 386-1443. Inspectors will return calls when in the office.

What do I do if I have a code related question during the day when an inspector is not available?

The Lieutenant of Engineering, or a Fire Protection Engineer, are available during the day to answer specific questions related to the Seattle Fire Code. They may be contacted at (206) 386-1443. Note: It is acceptable to call Plan Review Engineers with Fire Code-related questions, but please do not call them regarding field inspection problems.

Will I be billed for a failed or missed engineering inspection?

Fees for most Seattle Fire Department construction inspections include a repeat inspection at no charge if the system does not pass the first inspection. However, if the contractor's lack of preparation is the reason for the failed inspection, the Seattle Municipal Code provides the Seattle Fire Department with the ability to recover the costs the department incurred in providing that inspection. In 2015, the fee is \$176 per hour, including time spent by inspectors preparing for the inspection, travelling, and at the job site. The fee will be charged whenever an inspection fails for the following reasons:

1. All required equipment and personnel including those with relevant certification not onsite within 20 minutes of appointed time.
2. Required pre-tests not completed and/or pre-test

paperwork not available before inspection is scheduled to begin.

3. No stamped/approved set of fire system plans (sprinkler, alarm, etc.) onsite, if applicable.
4. Unable to provide proof of required DPD electrical permit sign off, if applicable.
5. No proof of DPD certification for elevators (final white tag), if applicable.
6. Sprinkler piping covered before inspection (including both drywall and ceiling tiles).
7. Underground sprinkler supply line covered before inspection.

You will also be charged this fee if an inspection is cancelled with less than 24 hours notice.

What do I do if I do not understand the required corrections?

You may contact your assigned inspector directly or at (206) 386-1443 for any explanation or clarification which may be necessary.

When can I occupy or use my structure?

Occupancy and use of the structure are permitted only after approval of the Department of Planning & Development. You are in violation if you occupy the premises prior to obtaining this approval. The Fire Department considers occupancy to occur when non-construction employees or people begin working in or using the structure. Occupancy also occurs when non-permanent mounted stock or furnishings are moved into the building.

When can I request approval to occupy my building?

When the fire protection systems are approved and inspected and the exit ways are completed.

What are the fees for an inspection?

Please see the fee information provided on the Fire Marshal's Office website: <http://www.seattle.gov/fire/FMO/inspections/inspections.htm>.

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If I contract with a builder for the construction, who is responsible to call for inspections and final occupancy approval?

The legal owner is responsible to call for inspections and approvals. If you want your builder to assume this responsibility, this should be specified within your contract. Check your permit and make sure final approval to occupy has been given prior to moving into the building. Normally, the installing company schedules the inspection appointment for their installation.

Where can I get more information about Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) water service requirements?

To schedule an SPU inspection for underground cover or backflow assemblies, call (206) 684-5803, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., or after 9:00 a.m. call (206) 684-3333.

SPU requires inspections for water service piping used for fire protection and domestic water. Please follow these links to find more information from SPU:

Underground Cover: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Water/WaterService/InstallationRequirements/index.htm>

Backflow Requirements: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/MyServices/Water/WaterQuality/CrossConnectionControl/index.htm>

SMC 21.04.070 Cross-Connections: <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm>

WAC 246-290-490: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-290-490>