

Seattle Permits

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

Review of Seattle DCI Decisions by the Construction Codes Advisory Board

Updated January 9, 2015

If you disagree with how Seattle DCI applies a code to your permit application, you may ask for a second opinion from the Construction Codes Advisory Board (CCAB). This process gives you the chance to present your views to knowledgeable people who are not part of Seattle DCI.

CCAB review is only available for certain codes—the Building, Existing Building, Residential, Energy, Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical codes. It is not available for the Land Use Code, Fire and environmental codes. It is available for construction-related issues, but not for process issues such as renewal of permits. You must ask CCAB to review your project before your permit is issued. You can only ask for a CCAB review for your own permit application.

If you disagree with one of our decisions about how a code should be applied to your project, you should first discuss the question with your plan reviewer's supervisor and manager, and our principal engineer. We want to try to find a solution before going to CCAB.

If your issue is not resolved after talking to them, you may ask for an opinion from CCAB.

Who Is CCAB?

CCAB is a group of volunteers who represent the public and several construction-related professions, such as architects, engineers, and contractors. The members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. CCAB's main role is to give advice on proposed code amendments and new Director's Rules.

CCAB's decisions are always advisory, but we take them very seriously. The purpose of asking for CCAB's opinion is to for us to get more technical information and independent opinions.

Requesting CCAB Review

If you want to ask CCAB to review your question, you should send a written request to our principal engineer, c/o Seattle DCI, 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000, P.O. Box 34019, Seattle, WA 98124-4019. Your request should include a short description of your project and the code issue. After our principal engineer receives your letter, we will notify the chair of CCAB.

Review Process

If CCAB reviews your question, you will meet with a small committee of CCAB members. The meeting usually can take place about 2-3 weeks after we receive your letter. We need this time to find a time to meet, and to prepare.

During the meeting, we will both explain our sides of the question. Then there will be an informal discussion when the committee can ask questions, and will discuss the question with us. The committee will give an advisory opinion, usually at the end of the meeting.

There is no fee for CCAB review.

CCAB Committee

The chair of CCAB will choose at least 3 people to work on your question. The chair usually chooses members of CCAB, but might ask people with special expertise if it would be helpful. City staff will not be members of the review committee.

We want the CCAB review to be independent and fair. You and our staff involved in your project should not discuss the project with any CCAB committee member before your meeting. All communication with CCAB will take place through Seattle DCI's Technical



Codes Unit (TCU). If you or our principal engineer want to communicate with CCAB, TCU will make sure that everyone knows about the communication. We want everyone to have the same information and to feel that the CCAB review process is fair.

TCU will set a time to meet and will notify everyone. The preferred time for meetings is CCAB's regularly-scheduled meeting time on the first and third Thursdays of each month. If that time is impractical, we will find another time as close as possible to the time the request is made.

Preparation

You will need to write a letter or memo that explains your reasoning. Your letter should include a description of your project, a brief explanation of the issue, relevant code sections, and what other solutions you considered. Be sure to explain why you believe you are right. We will write a similar letter.

If possible, you should provide reduced-size copies of the pertinent pages of your plans with your letter.

If the committee wants more information before the meeting, they will ask TCU to notify you and the appropriate Seattle DCI staff.

The Meeting

At the beginning of the meeting, we will present the background of the issue. You will then present additional information. You may bring design professionals and others to help with your presentation. You can bring sketches and other types of visual information if you think it will help explain your issue.

The Opinion

The CCAB committee's recommendation is not binding on us—it is advisory only.

The committee will make a recommendation by unanimous vote. If any member disagrees, the committee may choose to either:

- Hold further meetings.
- Ask the full CCAB to resolve the issue. CCAB's recommendation will be by majority vote.

The review committee will send its recommendation to the Director of Seattle DCI with a copy to you, to our staff with whom the interpretation question began, and to our

principal engineer. We will notify you and CCAB whether we will follow the committee's recommendation.

If you disagree with the committee's recommendation you may ask the Director of Seattle DCI to reconsider. The Director's decision is the final administrative decision.

For more information about the Construction Codes Advisory Board and the review process, visit the CCAB website at www.seattle.gov/dpd/ccab or call Seattle DCI's Technical Codes Unit at (206) 233-3892.

Access to Information

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