Harris County Fire Code

Procedure Document (PD-002)
Small Tenant Improvement Projects

The information provided below will help determine which projects qualify for Small Tenant Improvement Review and will provide an overview of the Small Tenant Improvement review and permitting procedure.

Step One: Determine Eligibility

Certain occupancy types for lease spaces less than 5,000 sf are allowed to utilize our Small Tenant Improvement plan review and permitting process. If your proposed use of the leased space is one of the following occupancies, and the leased space is less than 5,000 square feet, then you may apply for review under the Small Tenant Improvement application.

Small Tenant Improvement Review is a privilege and it’s not always guaranteed to the occupancies outlined by Harris County Fire Code. Some occupancies will be handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the level of hazard. This will be determined by the Fire Marshal or the Building Official.

If your lease space does not meet the criteria identified above, your project will need to be submitted under the Commercial Building (Fire Code) application. Please visit http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Fire/Fire-Code/Fire-Code-Review for additional information.

Step Two: Required Submittal Documents

Plan submittals under the Small Tenant Improvement application need the following minimum items submitted:

1. Completed Application
2. Site Plan
3. Floor Plans

You may find the application along with sample floor plans and a sample site plan at the Small Tenant Improvement portion of our website located here: http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Fire/Fire-Code/Small-Tenant-Improvements.
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Application Information
This information will be required whether submitting in person to our office or online using our ePermits system.

- Name of Business
- Property address (including suite number if applicable)
- Total leased square footage
- Construction cost (minimum $100)
- TDLR Number (See Frequently Asked Questions below)
- Applicant name and information
- Owner name and information
- Building information such as the existence of any fire protection services (fire sprinklers, alarms, kitchen hood suppression systems, etc.)
- Description of what the space will be used for

Application Frequently Asked Questions:
- Do my drawings need to be sealed by and Architect or Engineer?
  Please visit http://www.tbae.state.tx.us/PublicInformation/FAQs#PracticeRequirements for additional information.
- What is a TDLR Number?
  If your project’s total estimated cost is more than $50,000, you are required to submit the project to the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation for an accessibility review. The TDLR number is a project number that is assigned by the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation when the project has been submitted for review. For additional information, please visit https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/ABProjectRegistrationOnline/
- Is the “Owner” on the application the owner of the business or the owner of the building?
  The “Owner” section of the application should be the owner of the building, not the owner of the business leasing the space.

Site Plan Information
The purpose of the site plan is for us to be able to locate the building as well as the leased space within the building.

- Nearby streets
- Overall building
- Indication of the leased space within the building
- Can be a computer generated drawing, a hand drawing or an aerial image as long as the information above is provided and legible.
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- Dimensions of spaces, rooms, paths of travel, etc.
- Rooms/spaces should be labelled according to their use.
- Doors and windows should be located and identified.
- Types of door locks should be indicated (manual lock indicators, electronic, electric strike, etc.)
- Illuminated exit signs
- Any emergency lighting should be shown
- Exterior lighting above each exit door
- Location and type of fire extinguishers
- Fire Protection system information (existing fire alarms, sprinkler systems, hood suppression systems, etc.)
- Fire rating of walls separating tenant spaces (should be provided by the landlord or the property owner).
- Egress - Show path of egress to the exterior and indicate the travel distance.
- Location of electrical breaker panel for lease space.
- Signage on Exit Doors "This door is to remain unloickeed when building is occupied"
- Provide the following information regarding the floor, walls, ceiling and trim:
  - Floors - List all flooring other than carpet, ceramic tile, vinyl composition tile (ex. hardwood flooring should be identified)
  - Walls - List all finishes other than typical sheetrock and paint (ex. wood panelling, vinyl wallpaper should be identified)
  - Ceilings - List all finishes other than typical acoustical ceiling tiles and metal grid
  - Trim - List all types other than typical wood trim
- If storage is proposed, provide the dollowing information:
  - Types of goods and equipment being stored
  - Shelving heights, locations, materials
  - Are any pallettes being used? If so, what type?

Floor Plan Information
The purpose of the floor plan is for us to be able to identify rooms, corridors, uses and other features in order to ensure a safe layout.
The information shown to the right is typical for the detail we need to conduct a plan review. Additional information/items may be requested during plan review as needed.
Additional Information Required for Food Establishments:

- Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services *approved* floor plan.
  Please refer to our Food Establishment Procedure document which can be found on our website or visit [http://www.hcphtx.org/](http://www.hcphtx.org/) for additional information.
- Please indicate the following on your floor plan submittal to us:
  - Description of type of cooking equipment that will be used (deep fryers, griddles, smokers, stoves, ranges, broilers, etc.)
  - Hood systems and any associated duct work
  - Indication of any automatic fire suppression systems serving these appliances
  - Location of gas feed serving the appliances if applicable
  - Indicate if alcohol will be served in the facility *(NOTE: An automatic sprinkler system is required for occupant loads of 100 or more in facilities serving alcohol and 300 or more for facilities not serving alcohol).*

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**Step Three – Submittal, Plan Review, Approval and Payment**

Submittal, Plan Review and Approval - The above documents can be submitted for review directly at the Harris County Permits Office or online using our ePermits system ([http://apps.harriscountytx.gov/EPermits/](http://apps.harriscountytx.gov/EPermits/)). If you have not used our ePermits system before, registration is simple and it will allow you to complete the entire permitting process online including *submittal, review, approval, payment and inspection scheduling*. There are Help Videos on the ePermits login page and the one entitled “Apply” will walk you through the entire process indicating how to apply for a permit.

Once the project has been submitted, the documents will be reviewed by one of our plan reviewers. Review times vary depending on workload, but in general, you should receive notification that the review has been completed within 3 business days. You will be notified via email of one of the following:

**Disapproval**

- The plan reviewer has made one or more comments to the submitted documents. Please address all comments and resubmit the project (under the same project number) for another review.

**Approval**

- If the project has been approved, the permit will be loaded into our system and payment can be made.
- Please note that sometimes plans are approved with reviewer comments. Please make sure to obtain the approved set of plans for your use.
- You should also download a copy of your permit documents once the permit has been purchased.
**Payment** - Payment can be made directly through the applicant’s ePermits account or through the Harris County Permits Office website using the 10-digit project number that was created for the project (See the **Check Project Status and Payment** hyperlink in Blue Box #2 at [http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Permits](http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Permits)).

**Step Four – Final Inspection**

Sometimes lease spaces are taken as-is and there is no construction associated with the project. If that is the case, the required final inspection may be requested immediately after purchasing the permit. If there is construction associated with the project, the purchasing of the permit allows for this construction to begin. Once any construction is complete, then the required final inspection can be requested.

The final inspections associated with our lease space permits are performed by the Harris County Fire Marshal’s Office. The inspection can be requested directly through the applicant’s ePermits account or through the Harris County Permits Office website (See the **Inspection Request** hyperlink in Blue Box #3 at [http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Permits](http://www.eng.hctx.net/permits/Permits)).