



City of Tualatin - Building Division

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When is an Architect or Engineer Required?

Commercial Buildings including Shell-Only Buildings (ORS Ch. 671 and Ch. 672)

An architect and/or engineer (s) is required to design and prepare construction plans for all commercial buildings as well as shell-only buildings over 20 feet in height or over 4,000 s.f. in total floor area. This is generally referred to as "***the 4,000 s.f. rule.***" Total floor area includes all floor levels combined, together with all exterior covered areas, such as covered entryways, covered drive-thru areas, or covered exterior patios (ORS 672.060(11) and 672.107(1)(a)(B)). All plan sheets submitted to the City including HVAC plans, plumbing plans, electrical plans, etc., must bear the stamp of the architect or engineer (s). One of the architects or engineers involved in design of the project must be designated as the design professional in responsible charge (2019 OSSC 107.3.4) and that person coordinates all the submitted documents, including deferred or phased submittals and plans by other engineers, by reviewing them prior to submittal to the City.

1st Generation Tenant Improvements including HVAC, Plumbing, and Architectural Plans

An architect and/or engineer (s) is required to design and prepare construction plans (including HVAC, Elec., & Plbg.) for the first tenant occupying any space ***within*** a shell-only building that is over 20 feet in height or over 4,000 s.f. in total floor area of the building, even if the tenant space being permitted is less than 4,000 s.f. Note that 1st Generation TI in a ***vanilla shell*** building does not necessarily require an architect or engineer because the HVAC, Plumbing, and Electrical work may be already built, and the space is almost ready-to-occupy usually needing just floor coverings and some interior finish work (see ORS 672.060(11) and OAR 806-010-0120). One of the architects or engineers involved in 1st Generation TI work must be designated as the design professional in responsible charge (2019 OSSC 107.3.4), and that design professional coordinates all submittals, the same as for a new commercial building (see above).

Other Tenant Improvements or Commercial Building Remodels, Additions, or Change-of-Use

An architect and/or engineer (s) is ***ONLY*** required for tenant improvements after the 1st Generation TI or for commercial remodels or alterations when the occupancy type changes (A assembly, B business, E education, F factory or industrial, M mercantile, S storage, etc.), when the type of construction changes (V-B, V-A, II-B, II-A, etc.), or when there is a structural change of any kind (ORS 671.030) in buildings over 4,000 s.f. (or over 20 feet in height). These same rules apply to HVAC plans or Plumbing plans associated with the alteration or change-of-use (ORS 672.060(11)).

Design-Build, Deferred Submittal, or Bidder-Designed (Delegated Design) Plans

The same rules as noted in all the above scenarios (4,000 s.f. rule) apply in any design-build, deferred submittal, or bidder-design work for commercial buildings. Bidder-designed HVAC or plumbing plans are required to be designed and stamped by a licensed engineer or architect (4,000 s.f. rule) even if such plans are given permission by the City to be deferred submittals, and the plans must also be reviewed, approved, and coordinated with all other submittals by the architect of record (2014 OSSC 107.3.4). Shop drawing review of any HVAC, plumbing, or electrical plans does not replace the requirement for plans to be prepared by an architect or engineer (ORS 672.060(11)).

New Multi-Family Apartment, Condominium or Attached Townhouse/Rowhouse

An architect and/or engineer (s) is required to design and prepare all the construction plans, including HVAC, plumbing, and electrical plans, for all new multi-family apartments or condominiums that have more than two dwelling units per building, including attached residential townhouses (sometimes called "row houses") with more than two in a row, whether on their own individual lots (zero lot lines) or not. An architect or engineer is ***NOT*** required for two-family dwellings (duplexes) or single-family homes unless special structural or geotechnical engineering conditions exist.