When Plans Submittal Is Required

State of Tennessee
Department of Commerce and Insurance
State Fire Marshal's Office
Division of Fire Prevention
Codes Enforcement Section
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-1162
Phone: 615-741-7190 Fax: 615-253-3267
http://tn.gov/commerce/sfm/fpcesect.shtml

A building plans submittal is required to the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) sealed by a Tennessee registered architect or engineer based on a building's occupancy type, location, and whether the project scope meets the definition of Construction. [Rule 0780-02-03-.02 Submission of Plans]

Occupancies Anywhere in Tennessee

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations anywhere in Tennessee:

1. Educational Occupancies, (schools) kindergarten through the 12th grade
2. Day Care Occupancies, (child and adult) licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS)
3. State owned or leased projects, (state office buildings, universities, colleges, etc.) Exception: Facilities leased by the state located in a jurisdiction of local government that has obtained the exemption authorized by Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-120-101(b)(2). [Rules 0780-02-03-.02(1)(d), Effective 06-27-2010]
4. State agency licensing, when the agency identifies through law or rule that the SFMO must perform fire inspections. (DHS, Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS).

Additional Occupancies Outside Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations that are located outside Exempt Jurisdictions:

1. Assembly Occupancy of 300 or more.
2. Business Occupancy three or more story buildings.
3. Residential Occupancies, except 1 & 2 Family Dwellings and Townhouses.
4. Correctional Facilities
5. Enclosed Malls
6. High-Hazard Industrial (2006 IBC Groups H-1 and H-2 only; Excluding Storage)

Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO formally delegates codes enforcement to local jurisdictions who have demonstrated that it is adequately performing its building codes enforcement program. These jurisdictions employ staff to perform plans reviews and field inspections for buildings and structures to ensure fire and building code compliance that they have adopted by ordinance. [TCA 68-120-101(b)(2)] A SFMO audit team performs quality audits of each Exempt Jurisdiction once every three years. [Rule 0780-02-19-.04]
The following jurisdictions have an exemption granted by the SFMO:

Alcoa Athens Bartlett Brentwood Bristol Chattanooga Clarksville Cleveland Collierville Columbia Cookeville Dyersburg Farragut	Franklin Gallatin Gatlinburg Goodlettsville Hendersonville Jackson Johnson City Kingsport Knox County Knoxville Lebanon Madison County (Excluding Jackson)	Maryville Memphis/Shelby County Millington Montgomery County Mount Juliet Murfreesboro Nashville/Davidson County (Excluding Oak Hill, Belle Meade, Forrest Hills, Berry Hill, and Lakewood) Oak Ridge Paris Pigeon Forge Sevierville White House

Definition of Construction

Use the definition of Construction to determine whether a proposed project scope of work would require a plans submittal. [Rule 0780-02-03-.01 Definitions] The term "Construction" does not include excavation or site preparation.

Construction means:

1. The erection of a new building
2. An addition to an existing building
3. A change of occupancy or occupancy group
4. An alteration that alters the exit arrangement
5. Fire resistive assemblies
6. Type of Construction
7. Installation of fire suppression system
8. Installation of fire detection systems
9. Installation of fuel fired equipment

No Review Letter

The SFMO may issue a No Review Letter for projects that, because of the type of work involved, do not meet the definition of Construction. This could be for a renovation project that does not meet the definition of construction. Another example would be a new church facility or new addition to an existing church facility that may have less than 300 occupants.

To receive a No Review Letter, the owner/designer must submit to the SFMO a formal request, completed Plans Review Submittal Form, and a $100 fee with adequate information for a determination and processing. The DSFM field inspector assigned to a project's county would be alerted to the new work and could perform inspections when necessary or visit the project site to collect information.

1. Provide a cover letter explaining the scope of work and floor plan(s) for the proposed project. Include the following information.

    A. Name, mailing address, and phone number for individual submitting request
    B. Project name, complete mailing address, county, and occupancy type

C. Owner representative's name and phone number for contact purposes so that a DSFM field inspector has access to the building
D. Written detailed description of the work to be performed
E. Floor plan, sealed by a designer, of each floor level with the use of each space showing what type and where the work is located in the building
F. Show size dimensions of spaces and building size when occupant load determinations are required; show occupant load for any assembly space