



State of Tennessee
State Fire Marshal's Office
Department of Commerce and Insurance
Division of Fire Prevention
Codes Enforcement Section
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When Plans Submittal Is Required

Pursuant to Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0780-02-03-.02, a building plans submission to the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office ("SFMO") is required based on a building's occupancy type, location, and the type of work being performed. The plans must be sealed by a Tennessee registered architect or engineer when required by Tennessee Code Annotated § 62-2-102.

Definition of Construction

Where construction as defined below is performed on the occupancies outlined in this document, plan submission to the SFMO is required. The term "construction" does not include excavation or site preparation. Construction, as defined in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0780-02-03-.01, means:

- The erection of a new building;
- An addition to an existing building;
- A change of occupancy or occupancy group;
- Alteration of the required elements of the corridors and exits of a building's means of egress;
- Alteration or repair of primary structural members;
- An alteration of fire resistive assemblies;
- A change of a building's type of construction;
- Installation or alteration of a fire suppression system;
- Installation or alteration of a fire alarm system;
- Installation or alteration of a smoke control system;
- Installation or alteration of fuel fired equipment; or
- Installation or alteration of a fire sprinkler system.

Occupancies Anywhere in Tennessee

Submission of plans to the SFMO is required for construction to buildings anywhere in Tennessee when they are the following occupancy types:

- Educational occupancies registered with the Tennessee Department of Education including Pre-K programs and kindergarten through the 12th grade;
- Daycare occupancies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services, including both child and adult facilities;
- State owned or leased buildings (state office buildings, universities, etc.) with the exception of facilities leased by the state located in a local jurisdiction that has obtained the exemption authorized by Tennessee Code Annotated § 68-120-101(b)(2);
- State licensed businesses when a state agency requires the SFMO to perform an initial fire inspection to receive the license; or
- Site plans and site work for Tennessee modular buildings that fit into one of the occupancy types above.

Occupancies Outside Exempt Jurisdictions

Submission of plans to the SFMO is required for construction to buildings that are outside of exempt jurisdictions when they are the following occupancy types:

- Assembly, Group A occupancies (for gathering of persons for purposes such as civic, social or religious functions; recreation, food or drink consumption; or awaiting transportation) of 300 or more calculated occupant load;
- Business, Group B occupancies with three or more stories;
- Residential, Group R occupancies except one- and two- family dwellings and townhouses;
- Institutional, I-3 occupancies, such as prisons or jails;
- Institutional, Group I occupancies with accommodations for sleeping that are not regulated by other state agencies for building and fire safety;
- Enclosed Malls;
- High-Hazard Industrial, Groups H-1 and H-2 only, excluding storage; or
- Site plans and site-work for Tennessee modular buildings that fit into one of the occupancy types above.

Open air pavilions or sheds that are single-story, and open from the floor to the roof or ceiling above for at least 80% of the building's perimeter, do not require plan submission to the SFMO (this does not include Educational Group E occupancies).

Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO formally delegates codes enforcement to local jurisdictions that are adequately performing their building codes enforcement programs. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 68-120-101(b)(2), these jurisdictions employ staff to perform plan reviews and inspections for buildings and structures to ensure fire and building code compliance that they have adopted by ordinance. In accordance with Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0780-02-19-.04, a SFMO audit team performs quality audits of each Exempt Jurisdiction once every three (3) years. A list of exempt jurisdictions can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/commerce/fire/codes-enforcement.html>.

No Review Letters

A No Review Letter may be requested for projects where neither the occupancy type nor the scope of work require approval as identified above. To receive a No Review Letter, the owner or registered architect or engineer must submit adequate information for the SFMO to make a determination along with the required fee through the SFMO submission portal. The Department's field inspector assigned to a project's county will be alerted to the new work and may visit the project site to ensure compliance.

The submittal package shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Name, mailing address, and phone number for individual submitting the request;
- Project name, building address, county, number of stories, and occupancy type(s);
- Owner representative's name and phone number for contact purposes so that a field inspector has access to the building;
- Detailed written description of the work to be performed; and
- For assembly occupancies, a floor plan that is sealed by a registered architect or engineer and includes the dimensions and use of each space with calculated occupant loads.

