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The code recognizes that upgrading existing buildings presents challenges to owners and builders who are planning a remodel and/or tenant improvement and the subsequent accessibility upgrade requirements. These challenges may include the physical characteristics of the building or the cost of providing full accessibility. To address these challenges, the code has provisions for an “Unreasonable Hardship Application” for projects whose total costs for alterations, remodel, and repair do not exceed the current valuation threshold of \$130,000.00. If the cost of the alteration, addition, remodel, and repair exceeds \$130,000.00, full accessibility compliance per California Building Code Chapter 11B is required.

To be eligible for an “Unreasonable Hardship Determination”, the Building Official must make a finding of unreasonable hardship based on the fact that the cost of providing all the accessibility features in accordance with all items on the priority list above, exceeds 20% of the total job cost valuation.

The applicant must fill out an “**Application for Hardship**” form and submit it to the Building Official along the permit application and plans showing the accessibility features to be added. If a waiver is granted, the area of alteration **plus** access features costing up to 20 % of the cost of the project need to comply with the priority list above.

Please make sure to contact the following City Agencies prior to submittal of plans:

- Building Division
- Planning Division
- Dept. of Public Works
- Fire Department
- Electric Department

If you have any questions or want to learn more about how your Building Department can serve you, please call 707/431-3346 or come by and visit us at the Healdsburg Community Development Center, 435 Allan Court, weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.



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TENANT IMPROVEMENT

PERMITS & APPROVALS

What is a Tenant Improvement?

Generally, a Tenant Improvement is construction to remodel, renovate, repair or improve an existing or new commercial space in preparation for use by a new tenant or relocated business.

Are there Zoning restrictions for tenant improvements?

The type of business including interior usage and improvements must be consistent with the allowable Zoning uses for the property. Exterior improvements and signage are subject to Design Review approval by the Planning Department.

Before remodeling, leasing, or renting a commercial space, you should ask the Planning Department if:

The uses that you are planning for the space require a Conditional Use permit. Be sure to describe as fully as possible the type of uses you are planning, especially if they involve food preparation or service, entertainment, or outdoor activities.

Any changes you are planning to the exterior of the space including signs, awnings, and painting require Design Review approval.

Are building permits required for a tenant improvement?

In addition to the Planning Department, there are other City approvals such as building permits and business licenses required for most tenant improvements.

The following information is required when applying for a Tenant Improvement building or planning permit.

- Two (2) floor plans drawn to scale (1/4" = 1 foot minimum scale). One showing the existing layout of the tenant space and the other showing the proposed layout.

Include on the proposed floor plan the location of all equipment, counters, shelves, furniture, electrical installations, exits, and bathrooms. If applicable, parking and landscaping should be shown on a site plan.



- California State Law requires that an architect or engineer prepare the tenant improvement plans for any structural work such as new stairways, mezzanines, bearing walls, removing bearing walls to create opening, etc.
- Provide a written narrative describing the proposed use, sales items, equipment, number of employees, and a valuation (job cost) of all improvements you are making to the tenant space.
- Provide five (5) sets of construction plans for all improvements (interior and exterior) associated with the tenant improvement.

Will other City Departments review my Tenant Improvement permit application?

Your Tenant Improvement application will be routed to the Planning Department, Fire Department, Electric Department and Public Works Department for review and approval. The proposed tenant must also obtain a business license and set up a utility billing account with the Finance Department before opening. It is advised that you contact those departments to determine what other requirements or fees may be necessary for your project.

Will I need to make my business accessible for people with disabilities?

Section 1134B of the 2010 California Building Code requires that when making improvements to an existing commercial tenant space, the area being remodeled and other portions of the building including access to the entrance of the building are required to be made accessible to those with physical disabilities. These requirements shall apply to the specific area of alteration, structural repair, alteration, improvement or remodel, as well as additions. Mandatory accessibility features to be provided are:

Access Priority List

1. An accessible entrance
2. An accessible route to the altered area. *(An accessible route may include access from an adjacent parking lot and sidewalk to the area of alteration)*
3. At least one accessible restroom for each sex
4. Accessible telephones and drinking fountains
5. And when possible, additional accessible elements such as parking.

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