



CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

SUBJECT	EFFECTIVE DATE	CODE SECTION(S)
Tenant Improvement Professional Design Requirements	May 2, 2024	CBC 107.1 & 5536.1 Business & Professions Code

Purpose: To clarify the requirement that most commercial tenant improvement projects are required to be prepared by a licensed design professional.

California Building Code Section 107.1 requires construction documents to be prepared by a registered design professional where required by the statutes of the jurisdictions in which the project is to be constructed. Where special conditions exist, the building official is authorized to require additional construction documents to be prepared by a registered design professional.

Tenant Improvements (T.I.'s) and/or additions to non-residential projects require a licensed professional to be responsible for the preparation of construction documents (§5536.1 Business & Professions Code). Section 5538, outline specific conditions for the alteration of non-structural storefronts, interior alterations, and additions and other nonstructural or non-seismic work that does **not change or affect the structural system or safety of the building**, and which may be performed by unlicensed individuals.

The intent of this policy is to clarify what constitutes a change or affect to the safety of the building. Projects may be required to be assessed on a case-by-case review of the proposed alteration/addition to determine if a licensed professional is required for the design.

Policy:

The following items are considered to impact the structural or safety of a structure for determining professional design requirement of tenant improvements:

- 1) Any project which is required by State law due to structural design to be completed by a licensed professional.
- 2) Any project which requires fire rated assembly design or alters existing fire ratings.
- 3) Any project which changes the occupancy of a structure or space to a more restrictive occupancy.
- 4) Any project involving an A or H occupancy.
- 5) Any project which alters existing egress system, including but not limited to rated exiting corridors or requires new rated exit corridors, alters, or reduces required exit access of the egress system, modifies/reduces/add required exit doors, or increases the occupant load.
- 6) Any project which alters the existing disabled access features of the site or building creating disabled access compliance issues.
- 7) Any project which requires modification of the fire sprinkler system.
- 8) Any project which reduces existing light and ventilation (natural or mechanical) for occupied spaces to less than the minimum required by adopted codes, or a project with potential sanitation issues.
- 9) Any project which modifies existing electrical components, including but not limited to lighting, power, panels, distribution, circuitry.
- 10) Any project that modifies plumbing installations other than fixture replacement.
- 11) Any code enforcement case, upon review by staff, determined to be in major violation of City Codes/Zoning laws or affecting the requirements of any other regulatory agency (Public Works, Novato Fire, Sanitary, Water or Marin County Health Department, etc.).
- 12) Other projects which, in the opinion of the Building Official, create safety issues which have not been addressed properly by non-licensed professional.

Mark Setterland, Chief Building Official