



STATE LAWS REGARDING ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS Stamping Req's. (RCW 18.08.410 & RCW 18.43)

- **When is an architect or engineer (*licensed design professional*) required for new buildings?**
All non-residential buildings and structures over 4,000 s.f. in total area (total area includes the area beneath outdoor covered areas such as porches, drive-thru canopies, patio covers, etc., see definition of building area in the IBC) AND all multi-family residential buildings over 4 dwelling units (including townhouses or row-houses) must have a licensed design professional(s) to design and prepare the plans for submittal to the City of Richland for plan review prior to permit issuance. One of the licensed design professionals must be designated by the permit applicant as the registered design professional in responsible charge of the entire project who must fill-out and sign the City's "Worksheet for Commercial Plan Reviews" in order to establish clearly who is acting as such during the project. There are some buildings that require a licensed design professional even if less than 4,000 s.f. in size because of structural and/or other complications pursuant to the IBC or the IRC.
- **When is an architect or engineer required for remodel or T.I. work in commercial buildings?**
Whenever the tenant space is more than 4,000 s.f. in area. Also, if a remodel or tenant improvement (T.I.) involves an area less than 4,000 s.f. but is within a building that is more than 4,000 s.f. and the work proposed involves structural, life-safety, or fire-safety items, such as exits, fire alarm or fire sprinkler changes, change of use or change of occupancy category, or other similar code items, then a licensed design professional is required to prepare, stamp, and sign the plans submitted to the City.
- **Do all the plans have to be stamped by the licensed design professional (s)?**
Yes. The City requires all sheets of the submitted plans to be stamped by the architect and engineer(s) involved. Review letters from a licensed design professional do not substitute for the stamping of the plans themselves. For out-of-state prepared plans, a review letter is not allowed, either; the actual plans must be stamped. The City requires one set of the submitted plans to be "wet-stamped" with original signature; the other submitted sets of plans can be a copy of the stamp & signature.
- **Are mechanical, plumbing, and electrical plans required to be stamped?**
Yes. For non-residential buildings and structures over 4,000 s.f. in total area AND all multi-family residential buildings over 4 dwelling units, there must be mechanical, plumbing, and electrical plans with a minimum amount of information on them (as noted in the City's submittal requirements, see separate handout) and such plans must be stamped by the licensed design professional (s) who prepared them. For commercial remodels explained in question #2 above, any mechanical, plumbing, and electrical plans to show such work within the remodel or T.I. must be also stamped.
- **Are bidder-designed plans allowed?**
No. For non-residential buildings and structures over 4,000 s.f. in total area AND all multi-family residential buildings over 4 dwelling units, bidder-designed plans are not allowed, as the new stamping laws require all the plans to be stamped. If your proposed project is less than these two limitations, then bidder-designed plans by a sub-contractor who does not have licensed design professional on staff is allowed because none of the plans have to be stamped in those cases.
- **Are deferred submittals allowed?**
Sometimes. In circumstances where a large commercial building (over 12,000 s.f.) has complicated mechanical, plumbing, or electrical systems, the City will allow deferral of those plans to help "fast-track" the project; please request deferral prior to applying for permit. Smaller commercial buildings and multi-family buildings are not allowed to defer mechanical, plumbing, or electrical plans. Deferral of fire-alarm and fire-sprinkler plans is allowed in most cases regardless of the size of the building.