



## NEW RESTAURANT PERMITTING PROCESS

### Frequently Asked Questions

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#### **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

**1. Which department should I visit first if I want to open a restaurant?**

Prior to initiating your site search, visit the Department of City Planning to determine which parts of the City or a neighborhood are zoned to permit restaurants. After you find a specific location, return to the Department of City Planning to re-confirm that this specific site is zoned for your type of restaurant. Some neighborhoods will not allow any additional sit-down restaurants, although they may permit additional counter-service restaurants. If you select a site that requires a Conditional Use permit, the review process can take 3 months or longer and requires a public hearing. You may also have to go through a neighborhood notification process. Visit Planning Department at 1660 Mission Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Counter #1, San Francisco, CA 94103 or by calling at (415) 558-6377.

**2. How many City departments are involved in reviewing a building permit for change of use for restaurant?**

Please visit <http://sfdbi.org/sites/default/files/IS%20G-25.pdf> and click permitting process flowchart of restaurant for City departments involved in the review process.

**3. If I apply a building permit to remodel an existing restaurant, dose the permit need to be reviewed by Planning Department?**

No, if the occupancy will not be changed and the remodeling does not involve any exterior work, the permit is not required reviewing by Planning Department and may qualify to be reviewed/approved over-the-counter.

**4. What is the timeframe for building permit approval for change of use for restaurant?**

This depends on the overall scope of work. After Planning Department approval, smaller scopes of work may qualify to be reviewed and potentially approved over-the-counter while you wait; larger scopes of work may be reviewed in house within four weeks by the Department of Building Inspection.

**5. Will Fire Department be involved in reviewing a building permit for change of use for restaurant?**

Yes, if the restaurant is classified as a Group A-2 occupancy (>49 occupants) or occupied floors of the building >75 ft. above lowest of Fire Department vehicle access (SFBC Section 403.1).

**PERMIT APPLICATION:****6. Can an applicant submit a building permit for change of use for restaurant without plans, or with plans that are not prepared by licensed design professionals?**

No, two (2) sets of plans are required for submission for a building permit and all plans are required to be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer.

**7. Do I need a permit to use sidewalk during the construction?**

Yes, a Street Space Permit is required by Bureau of Street Use and Mapping (BSM). For more information, please visit [Bureau of Street Use and Mapping](#) or call (415) 554-5810.

**8. Do I need to apply a separate permit for a sign of restaurant?**

Yes. After the building permit is issued, apply a sign permit (Form 4/7) with 2 sets of plans at 1660 Mission St, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Information Counter.

**9. Are electrical and plumbing permits required as well?**

The building permit application Form 3/8 including new or remodeling of kitchen or restroom shall indicate that both electrical and plumbing permits are required. For more information, please contact Building Inspection Division at (415)558-6570.

**BUILDING AND OTHER CODE REQUIREMENTS:****10. Will Accessibility Requirements be triggered when I apply a building permit for change of use for a restaurant?**

Yes, in accordance with San Francisco Building Code Chapter 11B, Accessibility to Public Buildings, Public Accommodations, Commercial Buildings and Publically Funded Housing, disability access improvements is required when work involves alteration and/or structural repairs.

**11. Will seismic retrofit upgrade be triggered?**

Seismic retrofit upgrade will be triggered when the change of use results in an increase of more than 10 percent in the occupant load of the entire building or structure, and which also increases the occupant load by more than 100 persons as compared to the occupant load of the existing legal use or the use for which the building was originally designed (SFBC Section 3408.4.1).

**12. What other building/mechanical/energy code requirements will be triggered?**

Depending on your scope of work, in addition to building code requirements, mechanical and energy code requirements may be triggered if your restaurant project involved new or altered store front, other building envelop components, HVAC and lighting systems. State and local Green Building requirements may also apply.

**13. Can I change façade of the restaurant?**

This is subject to Planning Department's approval.

**COSTS/FEES****14. What will be the construction cost to meet San Francisco Building Code requirements?**

Depending upon the scope of work, the cost will vary. Please consult a licensed civil or structural engineer, architect or a licensed contractor, to obtain accurate estimates and multiple bids. The Department of Building Inspection may adjust the proposed construction according to the latest edition of DBI Cost Schedule.

**15. What is the cost of building permit application? Is it a fix fee or a percentage of construction costs?**

Cost of permit is a percentage of construction costs per San Francisco Building Code Section 110A. For more information, please visit [www.sfdbi.org/fees](http://www.sfdbi.org/fees) and click "Alteration Building Permit" under "Permit Fee Tables."

**16. Will School Impaction Fee apply to a building permit for change of use for restaurant?**

The State has ordered the governing board of the SFUSD to levy a fee for any project increases floor area for commercial occupancies. This fee is to be paid prior to the issuance of a building permit. For more information, please visit [www.sfdbi.org/information-sheets](http://www.sfdbi.org/information-sheets) and click Information Sheet G-11.