



TACOMA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin

The Construction Inspection Process

Commonly Asked Questions

When do I call for an inspection?

All Inspections:

Work must be complete, pretested and ready. A copy of the approved plans and a copy of the plan permit letter must be at the job site at the time of inspection.

Fire Alarm:

Before calling for inspection the electrical permit must be signed off by Tacoma Power and the system must be pretested. This includes all auxiliary equipment and the fire alarm controls. All carpeting, ceiling tile, drywall and doors must be in place to conduct alarm audibility tests.



Underground Cover:

Underground pipe inspection must occur prior to covering. All tie rodding, etc. must be complete and coated with bituminous or other acceptable corrosion retarding material. Tie in with the city and the building is not necessary. Inspection of thrust blocks may occur during or after pouring. Depth and width of the block must be exposed for measurement.

Underground Hydro:

Underground may be covered if cover inspection has occurred, however, pressure drops must be within allowable limits. Hydro must occur prior to connection with the building.

Underground Flush:

Inspection must occur prior to connecting with the building system. The contractor must call Tacoma Water to turn on the service at 253.502.8215.

Sprinkler Cover:

You must call for cover inspections prior to installation of drywall or tiles that would interfere with visual access.

Elevator Inspections:

Inspections shall be scheduled with the state Elevator Inspector (L&I).

Whom do I call to request an inspection?

Inspection requests are scheduled by calling 591.5754. Systems that require a functional test must be pretested prior to the inspection appointment date.

What information do I give when I call to request an inspection?

Your name, your company, your phone number, the inspection address, Tacoma Permit Number, the type of inspection, and the approximate number of devices or area to be tested.

How soon after I call can I expect my inspection?

Short time delays of two or more days may occur, due to the availability of inspectors. However, inspections are typically scheduled for the next business day if called in before 3:00pm. Overtime inspections, available for a fee, may be requested and will be filled, as inspectors are available. Careful adherence to the procedures as outlined in this bulletin

will reduce the likelihood of a delay.

**Must I be present when the inspector comes?
Do I need approved plans on site?**

A representative capable of performing the required tests and capable of providing access to inspection areas, must be present. This person must have a copy of the approved plans and a copy of the plan review letter, or other correction notices.

If I need to talk to my inspector, when can he/she be reached?

Messages for inspectors may be left between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, at 253.591.5740. Inspectors will return calls when in the office.

What do I do if I have a code related question during the day when an inspector is not available?

A Fire Protection Engineer is available during the day to answer specific questions related to the Fire Code. The FPE may be contacted at 253.591.5503.

What will happen if my system fails to pass inspection?

All systems must be pretested to prove they work correctly *before* Tacoma Fire Department performs their inspection. If a system fails to pass the original inspection, a fee will be invoiced for all subsequent reinspections. Invoiced fees reflect actual time required for the inspection, to include office and travel time for inspectors (\$170 minimum).

What do I do if I do not understand the required corrections?

You may contact the FPE or your assigned inspector directly or at 253.591-5740 for any explanation or clarification that may be necessary.

When can I occupy or use my structure?

Occupancy and use of the structure is permitted only after approval of the Building and Land Use Services. You are in violation if you occupy the premises prior to obtaining this approval. The Fire Department considers occupancy to occur when non-construction employees or people begin working in or using the structure. Occupancy also occurs when nonpermanent mounted stock or furnishings are moved into the building.

If I contract with a builder for the construction, who is responsible to call for inspections and final occupancy approval?

The legal owner is responsible to call for inspections and approvals. If you want your builder to assume this responsibility, this should be specified within your contract, but you should check your permit and make sure final approval to occupy has been given prior to moving into the building. Normally, the installing company schedules the inspection appointment for their installation.

When can I request approval to occupy my building?

When the fire protection systems are approved and inspected and the exit ways are completed. However, several city agencies will need to sign your application for Certificate of Occupancy (CO) before you can move in. Contact your building inspector to discuss final CO issues or the possibility of a Temporary CO (additional fees may be charged for TCO).