Safety Codes, Permits and Inspections
Commercial Building Permit
Minimum Submission Guide
COE-SCPI-GUID-0001

Edmonton

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1. Who should use this guide?

This guide is for anyone applying for a **commercial building permit** within the City of Edmonton (City), including:

- **Permit Applicants/Holders:** The person or company responsible for submitting the permit application and serving as the primary contact for the project.
- **Constructors and Trade Contractors:** The companies and individuals overseeing or performing the actual work on-site (such as electrical, plumbing, or HVAC trades).
- **Designers:** Architects, engineers, interior designers and others who prepare the plans and specifications for the project.

If you are starting, managing or designing a **commercial construction**, **renovation** or **alteration** project in Edmonton, use this document to ensure you submit the required information for building permits.

2. Applying for a Building Permit

Submit and manage your commercial building permit through the City of Edmonton Self-Serve Portal. Use the portal to upload plans, track application status, pay fees, and schedule required inspections. For more detailed information, visit the Self-Serve Help Centre.

3. Clarifying the Difference: Development Permit vs. Building Permit

Applicants often wonder why the website lists separate requirements for development permits and building permits for drawings with the same name (like site plans or floor plans):

- **Development Permits** focus on compliance with the Zoning Bylaw. The City reviews proposed developments to ensure that land use meets municipal regulations.
- **Building Permits** focus on life safety systems and compliance with the National Building Code - Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)) and other regulations under the *Safety Codes Act.* The City reviews submitted information to evaluate alignment with applicable codes and standards

The Bottom Line: You may use the same foundational drawings for both applications, but your building permit submission must feature required safety data (such as fire-resistance ratings, fire hydrants, and structural notes) outlined in this guide.

4. Trade Permits

Trade permits (electrical, plumbing, gas, HVAC) are required based on project scope and are subject to adjustment during intake. Please note the following process rules:

- **Integrated Under the Building Permit:** Trades do not apply for permits separately; all trade permits are created under the primary building permit.

- **Assigning Trade Contractors:** The building permit holder must enter trade firm names into the project portal before trade permits can be issued and inspections scheduled. Multiple trade firms may be added if a single trade discipline is split between companies.
- **Updating an Assigned Trade:**
    - **Before Issuance:** The building permit holder can modify the trade contractor's details in the self-serve project portal.
    - **After Issuance:** To change a trade contractor after a permit has already been issued, follow the instructions on the Contractor Change Request Form.

5. Minimum Submissions and Authority to Request Information

A complete application requires the minimum documents, drawings, and specifications listed in Table 1: Minimum Submission Requirements. These documents must be appropriate and sufficient for the specific project's nature and scope to allow for a proper plan review. In addition, all submissions must meet the following requirements:

- **Legibility:** Documents must be submitted at sufficient resolution to be clear and readable
- **Proper Labelling:** Documents must be clearly labelled for their intended purpose. Labels like "Tender Only" or "Not for Construction" are invalid and your application will not be processed
- **Organization and File Size:** Documents must be filed into the correct upload locations and maintained in a reasonable order. Large PDF sets must be split into smaller files (maximum of about 20 sheets) by discipline or topic
- **Authentication:** If your project requires professional involvement (i.e., an architect, engineer, etc.), the documents must be authenticated. Schedules of Professional Involvement may also be required. See Appendix 1 for more information about professional involvement

The type, detail, and number of drawings and specifications that you submit are determined by the NBC(AE) and the scope of your project. It is your responsibility to ensure your submission is appropriate and sufficient to demonstrate compliance with applicable codes. Your design can comply in two ways: by meeting the **acceptable solutions** defined in Division B of the NBC(AE), or by submitting an **alternative solution** with supporting documentation that complies with requirements in Division C (Section 2.3).

To ensure compliance with the *Safety Codes Act*, the City may require additional information beyond the minimum submission requirements listed below. In accordance with the Safety Codes Act (Permit Regulation, s. 20) and in the "Safety Codes Permit Bylaw 15894" (s. 5(b) and 5(e) and s. 6(1)), the permit issuer may request any additional information deemed necessary to verify the technical nature and the extent of the proposed undertaking. Please be aware that providing such information is mandatory and permit applications will be canceled if the information is not received within the timelines given.

6. Detailed Submission Requirements & Triggers

Note: The column headers in the table below are clickable links that provide more information on each project type.

Table 1: Building Permit Minimum Submission Requirements

✔ Required | (i) Scope Dependent | — Not Required

Document/Drawing Requirement	New Building	Building Addition	Change of Use	Interior Alteration	Exterior Alteration
Code Analysis	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Floor Plan	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Survey Plan	✔	✔	—	—	(i)
Site Plan	✔	✔	(i)	(i)	✔
Key Plan	—	(i)	✔	✔	✔
Elevation Drawings	✔	✔	—	(i)	✔
Section & Detail Drawings	✔	✔	—	(i)	(i)
Structural Plans & Specifications	✔	✔	—	(i)	(i)
Geotechnical Report	✔	(i)	—	—	(i)
Mechanical Drawings & Specifications	✔	✔	✔	(i)	—
Electrical Drawings & Specifications	✔	✔	(i)	(i)	—
Energy Specifications	✔	✔	—	(i)	(i)
Professional Involvement	✔	✔	(i)	(i)	(i)
New Home Warranty Letter	(i)	(i)	—	(i)	—
Project Implementation Plan	✔	✔	(i)	(i)	✔

The architectural drawing package submission typically consists of a code analysis, floor plans, key plans, elevation drawings, as well as section and detail drawings (where applicable). Architectural plans for interior or exterior alterations must clearly display both existing conditions and proposed changes. (See NBC(AE) Div C. Article 2.2.2.1)

6.1. Code Analysis:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For all projects. Details must reflect the nature and scope of the work to demonstrate how the proposed design complies with applicable codes, ensuring the reviewer has the necessary information to perform a thorough review.

- **Minimum Requirements**: Details are project-dependent and must include at least:
  - Code editions of design
  - Classification of building
  - Municipal address
  - Building area, including any division of a building by a firewall or demising wall
  - Design occupant loads
  - Washroom count
  - Travel distances to exits

6.2. Floor Plan:

- ✔ **Always Required:** Refer to Floor Plan Standards and requirements below.

- **Minimum Requirements**:
  - Scale must be equal to or greater than 1:100 (⅛" = 1') with a north arrow shown
  - Plans must detail wall/partition locations, doors, windows, dimensions, and intended room uses
  - Plans must show exit locations, required fire-resistance ratings (for each storey, suite, mechanical shaft, and mezzanine), and the location/ratings of closures like fire doors and dampers, noting the sources of ratings information

6.3. Survey Plan:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and additions. Refer to Survey Plan Standards and requirements below.

- (i) **Scope Dependent**:
  - Required for exterior alterations when proposed work occurs at or near the property line

- **Minimum Requirements**: Survey plans and/or real property reports must be up-to-date, show all rights-of-way, easements, or encumbrances, and be authenticated by a registered Alberta Land Surveyor within the past two years.

6.4. Site Plan:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and building additions. Refer to Site Plan Standards and requirements below.

- (i) **Scope Dependent**:
  - Required for change of use of a building when the new buildings classification affects spatial separation between adjacent buildings and property lines
  - Required for interior alterations when the affected tenant space proposes site changes such as required accessible parking, revised fire access routes, etc.

- **Minimum Requirements**: Site plans show building location (measured from property lines), adjacent existing buildings, firefighting access routes/hydrants, curbs, and existing/finished ground levels.

6.5. Key Plan:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For change of use and interior alterations to show the exact location of the work within an existing building
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for building additions if the new structure adjoins an existing tenant space, potentially modifying existing fire separation ratings or building classifications
- **Minimum Requirements**: A Key Plan is a floor plan of the entire building. Key plans must establish the exact location of the job within the building and include doorway addresses, suite layouts, exits, and demising wall locations

6.6. Elevation Drawings:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings, additions and exterior alterations. Refer to Elevation Drawing Standards
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for interior alterations when adding new windows or doors to exterior walls

6.7. Sections & Details Drawings:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and building additions.
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for interior alterations such as demising walls, washrooms, or heavy rooftop equipment and for exterior alterations such as modifying exterior walls
- **Minimum Requirements**: Drawings must show layers for insulation, air barriers, vapour barriers, and cladding

6.8. Structural Plans & Specifications:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and building additions
- (i) **Scope Dependent**:
  - Required for interior alterations when building new demising walls over 3.6m in height, creating mezzanines, or installing new rooftop units that alter structural loads
  - Required for exterior alterations if structural load-bearing walls are modified for new openings
- **Minimum Requirements**: Structural drawings must be designed, stamped and authenticated by a registered professional

6.9. Geotechnical Report:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings
- (i) **Scope Dependent:** Required for building additions and exterior alterations depending entirely on the foundation and structural shoring scope of the project
- **Minimum Requirements**: Geotechnical reports must be designed, stamped and authenticated by a registered professional

6.10. Mechanical Drawings & Specifications:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings, building additions and change of use
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for interior alterations if modifying HVAC systems, plumbing layouts, or energy components
- **Minimum Requirements**: Must show principal building services equipment (location, size, capacity); size/height of chimneys and gas vents; location of combustion air/ventilation openings; and sizing/continuity of all piping, ducts, shafts, flues, and fire dampers. It must also detail building drains, cleanouts, vents, and the potable water distribution system

6.11. Electrical Drawings & Specifications:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and building additions
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for change of use and interior alterations when modifying electrical distributions or life-safety layouts
- **Minimum Requirements**: Must detail main building/suite services equipment (location, size, capacity, type); emergency lighting paths and exit sign locations; and fire, smoke, and heat detection/alarm system layouts

6.12. Energy Specifications:

- ✔ **Always Required:** For new buildings and building additions over 10m^2 (per National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings (NECB) or NBC(AE), Section 9.36.). Refer to Energy Code Requirements
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for interior alterations (including shell fit-ups) or exterior alterations if the base building was permitted after October 31, 2016, or falls under modern energy compliance paths

6.13. Professional Involvement:

- ✔ **Always Required:** When dictated by Division C, Section 2.4 of the NBC(AE) based on a building's size, area, and occupancy use
    - **Note**: When the NBC(AE) requires Schedules of Professional Involvement, it triggers a mandatory requirement for a Coordinating Registered Professional (CRP) and a completed Schedule A. Individual engineering or architectural drawings will **not** be accepted without a CRP/Schedule A
- (i) **Scope Dependent**: If the size and complexity of a project give rise to special safety concerns, the authority having jurisdiction may require the involvement of one or more registered professionals (refer to Sentence 2.4.1.1.(4).)
- **Requirements**: See Appendix I below
- **Authentication**: All submitted engineering and architectural plans must be authenticated by registered professionals licensed in Alberta, in accordance with the appropriate regulatory standards of practice

6.14. New Home Warranty Letter:

- (i) **Scope Dependent**: Required for new buildings, additions, or interior alterations only if the project involves residential components or dwellings built to be sold or rented. Must be acquired prior to permit issuance.
    - **Note**: See https://www.alberta.ca/new-home-warranty-overview

6.15. Project Implementation Plan (PIP):

- ✔ **Always Required:** A signed PIP Letter of Commitment and on-site plan are mandatory for the following commercial project types across any building type and any location: (Refer to Project Implementation Plan Guide).

    - **New Buildings / Structures:** All new standalone builds
    - **Additions:** Any vertical or horizontal expansion to an existing building
    - **Exterior Alterations:** Any modifications to the building envelope
    - **Exterior Alterations to the Site:** Any exterior modifications
    - **Demolitions:** Complete or major structural removals

- (i) **Scope Dependent**: For other commercial scopes, a PIP Letter of Commitment is required based on specific risk factors:

    - **Interior Alterations:** Required for projects involving Selective Interior Demolition.
    - **Change of Use / Renewable Energy Systems / Temporary Sites:** Required if the permit issuer determines the project scope involves risk factors like on-site excavation, heavy hoisting, or activities posing a hazard to the public (such as proximity to adjacent properties or compromised fire department access).
    - **Standalone Hoarding & Crane Permits:** A separate PIP Letter is required if the hoarding or crane installation is completely standalone with no associated commercial building permit (e.g., standalone facade painting). If an active building permit already exists for the site, a duplicate PIP letter is not required, as these activities are covered under the master site PIP.

- **Note:** Please include the signed **Letter of Commitment** with your application, confirming that a PIP will be created before work begins. The PIP itself does not need to be submitted but must remain on site as a living document for compliance officers. Additionally, a formal pre-permit review of the construction-time fire safety plan is mandatory for all **5- and 6-storey wood frame projects**.

Appendix 1 - Professional Involvement & Delegated Design

Professional Schedules (NBC(AE) Div C: 2.4.2)

When Schedules of Professional Involvement are required by the NBC(AE), a **Coordinating Registered Professional (CRP)** and a Schedule A must be submitted. Individual engineering drawings will not be accepted without them.

The 3-Phase Schedule Workflow

1) **To Get the Permit:** The owner must retain the design team and submit Schedule A (appointing the CRP) along with a Schedule B, listing the Registered Professional(s) of Record (RPR) for each specific discipline required by the CRP (Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, etc.).
2) **During Construction (Delegated Design):** If an RPR delegates specialized work (e.g., pre-engineered components), that delegated designer must execute field reviews and submit a Schedule C-3 to the RPR.
3) **To Get Occupancy:** RPRs provide a Schedule C-2 to the CRP after conducting field reviews. The CRP then coordinates all data and submits the Schedule C-1. The City will not grant occupancy without this C-1 form.

Mandatory Work Stoppage: If your CRP leaves the project, **all construction must stop immediately. If an RPR leaves the project, only work in that discipline must stop immediately**. In both cases, you must inform us. Work cannot resume until a replacement professional is retained, new Schedules of Professional Involvement are submitted to the City, and a permit (or revised permit) is issued.

Tip: Before filling out or uploading Schedules of Professional Involvement, the City highly recommends reviewing the joint publication created by APEGA and the AAA: NBC(AE) Schedules User Guide. Ensuring your package contains **Schedule A** alongside your **Schedule Bs** at intake will prevent your application from immediately being placed on a More Information Required (MIR) hold.