

## PORT CODE PROCEDURE GUIDE

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**NO. PCP-007**

**DATE** : January 1, 2026

**SUBJECT** : General Administrative Procedures

**TITLE** : Pre-Application Plan Review Procedure

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**PURPOSE** : To establish policies and procedures allowing for review and comment of specific design issues by the Port of San Francisco prior to application for a permit.

**REFERENCE** : Port of San Francisco Building Code (PSFBC)

- Section 106A.4.8 Pre-application Plan Review
- Section 110A, Table 1A -B Building Permit Application and Plan Review Fees

**DISCUSSION** : A preliminary verbal interpretation of a code requirement or alternative method of construction is considered informal information and may not always be accepted by the Plan Reviewer or Inspector who has been assigned to check the submittal documents for a project. Rather than wait for the plan review to reveal requirements of specific design issues, it may be advantageous to project sponsors to verify code requirements with a formal interpretation prior to completion of project drawings and before applying for a building permit.

This procedure sets out the process for requesting, conducting and concluding such a Pre-Application Plan Review.

NOTE: It is not intended that a general, non-directed plan review of a project will be made during this review; but that specific code issues will be addressed and resolved. Formal written confirmation of decisions agreed upon will be issued to the project sponsor following the meeting.

Formal written confirmation of interpretations will be issued to the project sponsor following the review.

**REQUEST FOR  
PRE-APPLICATION  
PLAN REVIEW**

: Submit requests for a Pre-Application Plan Review in writing as follows:

1. List each of the items to be reviewed in specific question format that can be answered "yes or no," if possible. The applicant shall propose a solution or provide a statement of position regarding each question asked and shall include pertinent code references. Items should be sequentially numbered. This list of questions or items will then form the agenda for a written response.
2. Include applicable drawings, documents, and other information as necessary to describe the conditions under question,
3. On the submitted drawings, highlight or "cloud" the areas to be reviewed, and provide cross-references to the questions. Where questions pertain to means of egress, indicate the path of egress on the drawings with arrows.
4. For applications where a Change of Occupancy is proposed, the registered design professional shall provide plans to show the occupancy classification, use, square footage, load factor (See CBC Section 1004), and calculated occupant load for each area within the entire shed or building. A summary

table with the above information shall be provided. Also see Chapter 4 of the California Existing Building Code as adopted by the Port of San Francisco.

5. To cover fees, include a check made payable to the Port of San Francisco (See FEES, below).

Note; a separate payment is required for Fire Department representation. (See FEES, below).

6. Address requests for a Pre-Application Plan Review by email to: permit-desk@sfport.com, or by U.S. mail to:

Port Permit Desk  
Engineering Division  
Port of San Francisco  
Pier 1, San Francisco, CA 94111

Indicate on the outside of the envelope: PCP-007 Pre-Application Plan Review Request.

- RESPONSE :** The Chief Building Inspector or designee and Port Permit Desk will assign your Pre-Application Plan Review request to one or more of the following:
1. Building Permit Group
  2. Plan Review Engineer Structural/Civil
  3. Plan Review Engineer Electrical
  4. Plan Review Engineer Mechanical
  5. Port Architect
  6. Port Fire Marshal
  7. Other staff as determined by the Chief Building Inspector or designee or Port Permit Desk

The plan review will be conducted by Port representatives as assigned. One or more plan reviewers from Engineering Division staff may be assigned to participate in the Pre-Application Plan Review depending on the complexity of the project and the issues in question. Interpretations by consultants from other agencies, such as; San Francisco Fire Department, Department of Public Health, Planning Department, or the Dept. of Building Inspection may be requested by the Chief Harbor Engineer for a building code interpretation to be made.

The Port representative will have final authority to determine which questions are addressed. Questions that are determined to be too broad in scope may be deleted from the request. Discussion may be limited only to written items of request in a question and answer format.

The Port may request additional information from the project sponsor in preparation for, or during, a Pre-Application Plan Review.

The Project Sponsor shall provide notes of the meeting to the Chief Building Inspector or designee in a format that allows for a simple 'yes' or 'no' response to each question by use of the initials of the reviewer. Examples of this format will be provided by the Port upon request. The Port reviewer shall respond within 30 days following the conclusion of the Pre-Application Plan Review. Such letter of response shall address each specific question and shall state the reasons for all conclusions.

For clarity, each item number of the written response shall correspond to the item number on the written request.

Notes, annotated drawings and other documents may be attached to the notes or letter of response for reference at the time of a building permit application.

The project sponsor shall attach a copy of the signed conclusions of the Pre-Application Plan Review letter of response as a lead sheet to the building permit application drawings. The responsible plan reviewer during the plan review process will honor these decisions.

The project sponsor may request a review of the Port staff determination by the Chief Harbor Engineer (CHE). Determinations of the CHE may be appealed in accordance with Section 105A.

In the event the code provisions referenced by the application are substantively revised prior to filing for permit, the applicant will be required to submit for a new pre-application plan review.

## FEES

- : Pre-Application Plan Review fees are payable upon request according to the Section 110A, Table 1A -B, Item 4. Table 1A-G item 3 (if required) and Table 1A-H (outside consultants, if required).

The San Francisco Fire Department charges plan review fees in addition to the above fees when Fire Department personnel are included in a review. See San Francisco Fire Code for appropriate fee. A separate payment for such fees made to Port of San Francisco is required for Fire Department representation.

Fees, in addition to the advance Pre-Application Plan Review payment, will be calculated at the conclusion of the review. The Port of San Francisco will not release notes or letters of written interpretation until all Pre-Application Plan Review fees are paid.

If the initial Pre-Application Plan review fee is paid but no such review is subsequently performed and no preparatory work has been done, the fee may be refunded in accordance with Section 107A.6.1.1.



Matthew Bell  
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Port of San Francisco

1/1/2026  
Date

Update reviewed and approved by Matthew Bell, Acting Chief Harbor Engineer January 1, 2026