

# City of Altoona – Building Department

## Outlets of Des Moines - Tenant Finish FAQ

900 Venbury Dr, Ste A, Altoona, IA, 50009 515-957-5128

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: What needs to be submitted when applying for a building permit for a tenant finish?**

A: Building permit application, 2 sets of drawings that have State of Iowa architect/engineer seals, interior lighting COMcheck packet, and an owner/landlord stamp on the drawings showing New England Development/Greeby acceptance.

**Q: What options are there to submit information to the building department?**

A: Information may be mailed, shipped, or hand delivered to 900 Venbury Dr, Ste A, Altoona, IA, 50009

**Q: Do we need to submit electronic drawings as well?**

A: Yes, before a permit can be issued, PDF copies are required. Please email them to [cbridges@altoona-iowa.com](mailto:cbridges@altoona-iowa.com).

**Q: How do we know what the building address and suite number are for the tenant finish we are designing?**

A: There are 9 buildings on site and each have their own building address. Each tenant has their own suite number. Verify with the owner prior to submitting the drawings and application that the correct building address and suite number are being used.

**Q: After plans are submitted for review, how do we get comments/respond to comments?**

A: Please be sure to provide email addresses so that the plan review comments may be emailed to the proper parties. This is the quickest way to communicate/address comments.

**Q: How long is plan review taking?**

A: The reviews can take between 5 and 21 business days, based on the review queue volume.

**Q: Is expedited review offered for a fee?**

A: No expedited review is offered.

**Q: Are any fees required up front before the review is completed?**

There are no fees owed up front before a review is performed.

**Q: To whom do we make checks payable?**

A: All checks are payable to City of Altoona.

**Q: Do we need to submit to the Fire Department for review?**

A: All documentation is to be sent to this department. If we determine any documentation needs to be reviewed by the Fire Department or other City entities, we will get the documentation to that department. Note: See other comments regarding exterior signage.

**Q: When are fire alarm and fire sprinkler shop drawings required to be submitted?**

A: These are required to be submitted at least two weeks prior to such work starting.

**Q: Will the tenants need to enter into a special inspection agreement with the City?**

A: It is not anticipated that tenants will be required to enter into a special inspection agreement. The owner has addressed this during the design of the building shell.

**Q: What are the most common items that hold up the permit from being issued once all plan review comments are made?**

A: We typically are not seeing the contractor's information and the contract amount on the building permit application, because it is not known during the review process. In order to issue the permit once all plan review comments are addressed, we need to have the contractor's information, the contract amount for the project, and verification that the general contractor is registered with Iowa Workforce Development.

**Q: Does the building permit for the tenant finish cover any exterior building signage?**

A: No, a separate submittal/drawings and permit application is needed for exterior signage. Chad Quick with the Planning & Zoning Department should be contacted for specifics. 515-957-5117 or [cquick@altoona-iowa.com](mailto:cquick@altoona-iowa.com)

**Q: If our tenant is a food service establishment, are any additional steps needed?**

A: Jason Merk ([jcmerk@dmgov.org](mailto:jcmerk@dmgov.org)) with the WRA needs to be contacted, and all work related to sanitary lines that should and should not connect to the grease interceptor need to be approved by him prior to submitting drawings for review. The owner should have information regarding size of grease interceptor, locations, etc. Also, the State of Iowa Health Department should be contacted, because there are some requirements that they may have that Altoona does not require, such as hand sinks.

**Q: Will we have to apply for a low voltage permit for the store's POS, sensormatic and sound systems?**

A: No

**Q: Will the architect need to make any site visits during construction?**

A: We do not require architect site visits.

**Q: Are there any specific lighting control requirements for tenant finishes?**

A: Yes. Per the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code, lighting needs to be controlled manually as well as via occupancy sensors or automatic time switch control devices. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: The tenant wants to install standards and shelving to display merchandise on walls. Are we required to provide any engineering for this?**

A: The design team responsible for the tenant space must review these loads and provide documents showing additional bracing as required. Any existing walls, such as demising walls, need to have input from Harrison French & Associates (HFA) to determine bracing requirements. We are seeing that most walls are being provided with bracing along the top plates to the roof system. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: How are most tenants obtaining code compliance for mechanical ventilation?**

A: The design team for the tenant finish needs to coordinate with the owner of the building to get information on the roof top units. The CFMs need to be shown on the drawings in a schedule based on the referenced roof top unit being used. Calculations need to be provided on the mechanical drawings as well. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building plan set.

**Q: What is required for interior signage within most tenant finishes?**

A: Restrooms require tactile accessibility signage and pictograms. (It is our understanding that the owner will be installing these, but please confirm. Accessible fitting rooms require signage with the universal symbol of accessibility on it. Each exterior exit door needs a tactile sign along with Braille that states "EXIT" installed next to the exit door. The letters on the sign shall be between 5/8" and 2" high. The main entrance doors to each tenant that have thumb turns are required to have signage in minimum 1" letters that state: "DOORS SHALL REMAIN UNLOCKED WHILE THE BUILDING IS OCCUPIED." Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: Are vestibules required at the main entry doors?**

A: Spaces that are over 3,000 square feet do need a vestibule at main entrance doors. The City is open to air curtains installed at these locations if designed per the 2015 IECC. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: Are there specific height requirements for service counters/cash wraps?**

A: Yes. If they are provided, portions of them need to be accessible for those in wheelchairs. If the overall height is less than 36" AFF, compliance will be met. If greater than 36" AFF, then a parallel approach is required that provides a minimum 36" wide by 36" high counter or a forward approach that provides a 30" wide by 36" high counter is required. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: Are dressing room required to be accessible?**

A: Yes. If dressing rooms are provided, at least 5% shall be accessible. An accessible route, 5' turn around, a 42" long bench with seating between 17" and 19" above the finished floor with a clear floor space positioned for a parallel approach shall be provided. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set. Coat hooks shall be shown at 48" max AFF.

**Q: If sinks are provided in staff break rooms, do they need to meet accessibility?**

A: Yes. The most common method has been to provide forward approach under the sink. If the maximum height above finish floor to the sink is 34", consideration shall be taken for the depth of the bowl and the gripping portion of the faucet. Compliance should be shown on the submitted building permit set.

**Q: If we install staff lockers, do they need to meet accessibility?**

A: Yes, at least 5% need to indicate compliance with reach ranges and proper grip to open the locker.

**Q. What is required for minimum plumbing fixtures?**

A:

1. **Restrooms** - The owner has shown installing single user restrooms in the tenant spaces. In most cases, it appears these will be for staff use only. The owner has installed public multi-stall restrooms within the allowable travel distance, so no additional restrooms within the tenant spaces are required.
2. **Drinking Fountains** - The owner has installed public drinking fountains within the allowable travel distance, so there is no requirement to install drinking fountains in each tenant space.
3. **Water Heaters** - Restroom lavatories and any service sinks, such as mop sinks, shall be provided with tempered water.
4. **Service Sinks** - The owner is providing shared service sinks for tenant access in buildings 5 & 6. Individual tenants are not required to provide service sinks within their space since these shared sinks are provided.