

[RICHLAND COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT](#)

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Commercial Plan Approval Guide

This guide details the general requirements for paper and electronic plans, electronic formatting requirements. Tips and best practices are also described to help make the plan approval process successful.

Quick tips as follows...

- Review project specific guides & resources located on our web page at building.richlandcountyoh.gov
- A transmittal or cover letter shall accompany all drawing resubmissions and revisions.
- All electronic plans and construction documents shall be submitted as an unsecured PDF.
- Make sure electronic plans have a digital index in the bookmarks of the file.
- Where submitting for a phased approval, provide the total number of scopes/phases or submit a phased approval worksheet.
- Statements of Special Inspection. For projects where special inspections are required, submit a complete statement, including all signatures and inspector qualifications.
- Resubmissions and Revisions, where answering comments to correction letters or conditions of plan approval...Please remember to circle or cloud the areas *in red* on all affected plan sheets. Please make sure the transmittal and/or cover letter discusses in detail each individual item that was corrected and/or addressed.

General Plan Requirements

Ohio Building Code (OBC) Section 106 requires that construction documents (plans, specifications, etc.) are submitted with an application for approval. OBC 106.1.1 provides a general outline for construction document requirements. More specific project requirements are published on our web page.

The Application Process

The following process outlines the steps required to obtain a building plan approval (the issuance of a permit) for construction of commercial and non-residential structures under the scope of the Ohio Building Code (OBC).

1. Obtain a zoning permit from your local zoning inspector. A list of zoning inspectors is available on our website or by calling our office. Your local zoning inspector in cities and villages can also help you determine whether your project is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (floodplain) and if any special construction is required. For projects located in the unincorporated areas of the county (townships), Richland Soil & Water Conservation District enforces floodplain regulations.
2. Verify with the local Health Department that your septic system or method of sewage disposal is approved for the proposed construction or will not interfere with additions, decks, etc.
3. Obtain Floodplain approval and stormwater approval/exemption from the Richland Soil & Water Conservation District. This applies to projects located within the unincorporated areas of Richland County **only**.
4. For projects that will be served by the Richland County sanitary sewers, complete an application for Sanitary Sewer Connection. The application shall be accompanied by a sanitary sewer lateral plan, the connection and permit fee. The application shall be signed by the Property Owner or the Registered Sanitary Sewer Contractor. Submit this information with item 6 below.

5. Complete a Commercial Building Plan Approval Application. The application is available on our website or by calling our office.
6. Submit all the documents via Paper or Electronically as follows
 - a. Application
 - b. Fees Worksheet. A fees worksheet is available on our website to assist in the fee calculation process.
 - c. Floodplain / Stormwater Approval...for projects located within the unincorporated areas of Richland County **only**.
 - d. Zoning Permit
 - e. Plans/Construction Documents.

At such time as a complete application and documents have been submitted and all fees have been paid, the construction documents will be reviewed. If the drawings cannot be approved or more information is required, the applicant will be notified with a list of correction items. One or more of the following 3 approval types may be issued: 1. Full Approval – All drawings submitted and approved. 2. Conditional Plan Approval – minor items on the plans are missing and/or need corrected to show compliance. Revised documents need to be submitted. 3. Phased Plan Approval – approval of certain phases or stages where additional or revised documents need to be submitted.

Submitting Paper Plans and Construction Documents

Applications and construction documents can be submitted via mail/carrier or in person at our counter during normal business hours.

- Submit 2 copies (3 copies for fire protection) of plans in person or via mail/carrier. Plans shall be bound in complete sets.
- Submit a Commercial Building Plan Approval Application and fees worksheet.
- Submit copies of Zoning, stormwater, and health/septic approval.

Once the drawings have been approved, the applicant will be notified to pick up the approved drawings and site inspection sign off log. The approved drawings and site inspection sign off log must be kept on site for inspection purposes.

Submitting Electronic Plans and Electronic Plan Requirements

Visit our web page at building.richlandcountyoh.gov and click on the link for the Online Permit Portal located in the menu on the left hand side of the page. You will be directed to the portal submission page. Complete all of the fields and attach files for review

1. Completed Application for Building Plan Approval. Typically, the application only needs to be submitted with the first submission. Resubmissions may require an additional application if information needs updated or a plan review comment required an additional application.
2. Copy of Zoning Permit where construction is in zoned locations. First submission only.
3. Copy of Richland County Stormwater Approval where projects fall under the jurisdiction of Richland County Stormwater Regulations. This approval is issued by the Richland Soil & Water Conservation District. See <https://richlandswcd.net/> for more information.
4. Construction Documents plans. Submit plans in a single coordinated PDF file that is unsecured. Supporting documents such a Geotechnical Reports, Shop Drawings, Truss Diagrams, etc. can be submitted as separate PDF files and shall be named accordingly.
5. Submit a fees payment worksheet with your application. If you do not submit a fees payment worksheet, we can complete one for you once we receive your application. It is important that the application scopes are properly checked and the square footages are accurately entered so the fees payment worksheet can be completed and coordinated with the application. Please make sure we have confirmed the amount of fees due prior to making any payments via our online payment portal.

6. Once we receive a complete submission (application, fees worksheet, construction documents/plans), the application will be processed and an application number will be assigned. We will notify the applicant typically within 1-3 business days of the receipt of documents and if any additional documents are required. Once fees are received, the application will be placed in the plan review queue.

Electronic Plan Requirements

1. All plans and construction documents need to be submitted as an unsecured PDF. We will insert an approval stamp, application information, and page number as part of the approval process. Once the plans have been approved, plans will be secured, published to the web portal, and the applicant will be notified via email.
2. Per OBC 106.1.1.1 each PDF file shall have a PDF digital index called "bookmarks", which shall have a sheet title and page number for each page in the document, along with the standard index.
3. Plans that are scanned into PDFs or plotted/printed to a PDF need to be legible. Plot legibly, per OBC 106.1.1, (11 x 17 is a recommended minimum) to a measurable scale (3/16", 1/4" etc.). Plotting to fit, "NTS", and bar scales will not allow the reviewer an adequate means of measuring. It is preferred that dimensions be shown on the plan, but if they are not we must be able to use the PDF measuring tools.
4. Rotate each sheet within the PDF file to view at the upright orientation.
5. Submit a complete plan set in a single PDF file. If plans cannot be submitted in a single PDF, multiple PDF files may be submitted provided that each file is named with an individual volume number and total number of files....i/e Bldg Plan set vol 1of4.
6. A complete plan set includes, but is not limited to, *information necessary to determine compliance with the building, mechanical, plumbing, fire, electrical, energy, and fuel gas codes*. **Review OBC 106.1.1** for detail on what information is required in the plans. A complete plan set includes, but is not limited to, construction plans, geotechnical reports, manufacturer's truss design drawings, steel building shop drawings, and automatic sprinkler and fire alarm calculations. All sheets shall bear the seal of the registered design professional or fire protection systems designer as applicable. The title or index sheet shall bear the seal, signature, and date of the registered design professional or fire protection designer.
7. Upload any other relevant information, such as Statements of Special Inspections, Geotechnical Investigations, project specifications manual, manufacturer's truss diagrams, energy compliance reports (COMCheck), etc. as a separate attachment. These files shall also include a cover sheet that bears the seal of the design professional responsible for their development. Please make sure each file is appropriately named as to its contents and is an unsecured PDF.
8. Any project specific information, such as a request for phased approval, detailed notes, site directions, special instructions to the plans examiner may be conspicuously noted on the title sheet of the plan set or in a separate transmittal letter.

Transmittal and Cover Letter requirements for Resubmissions

A transmittal or cover letter shall accompany all drawing resubmissions and revisions. The following information shall be provided in the transmittal or cover letter:

1. CPA number (s) as affected by the attached files
2. If submitting on paper, include the total number of copies being submitted (2 sets minimum, 3 for life safety / fire protection documents). All sheets and documents shall be bound (staple, binder clip, etc.) into coordinated sets.
3. If submitting electronically, all plan documents shall be combined into a single PDF file with an electronic index. The file name does not need to follow any certain format but shall be appropriately named and contain the date of submittal. For example....Foundation revision 01-26-2024.PDF
 - a. Where documents need to be submitted in multiple files due to size, please make sure each file is appropriately named and numbered. Include the total number of files submitted in the transmittal

- letter. File name for example.....Revision Plan Set 01-26-24 1 of 3.PDF
- b. Number of pages in each file and total number of pages transmitted.
4. Indication of scopes of work submitted for review...Structural, Electrical, Mechanical, Automatic Sprinkler, Fire Alarm, Signage, etc.
 5. Indication of any additional scopes of work submitted or areas/fixtures not previously submitted. i.e.....added square footage or alterations within attachment to existing structure, alterations made to existing structure to accommodate new construction.
 6. Responding to correction letters or review comments. Please note the correction letter number and comment number. If comments are only partially responded to or are incomplete, please note as such. If transmitted files are not a response to a correction letter please indicate so.
 7. Indication of any future scopes of work and/or deferred submittal documents not already submitted.
 8. Include a detailed response to correction letter items being responded to.....page number, how was comment addressed, pages clouded or redlined accordingly, revision block and design professional signature/date updated on each affected plan sheet.

Best practices for plans, submissions, and tips for success!

- Review project specific guides & resources located on our web page.
- Provide an index of all documents on the title sheet.
- Provide complete building code data (Use Group, Construction Type, Maximum Design Occupant load, etc.) clearly noted on the title sheet. See OBC 106.1.1 for complete information
- For projects involving new construction and/or additions, provide a detailed site plan. Property lines, existing structures, fire separation/setback distances, finished grade elevations, and utilities all need to be shown on the site plan. See OBC 106.1.1-2 for more detailed site plan requirements.
- Provide occupant load calculations showing compliance with OBC 1004 are provided and occupant loads are shown on the floorplans for each room and space.
- For projects with phased or deferred submittals, make sure that phased/deferred submittal documents are noted to the plans examiner. See our phased approval worksheet.
- All electronic plans and construction documents need to be submitted as an unsecured PDF. Submit a complete plan set in a single PDF file with a digital index in the bookmarks. Upload any other relevant information (geotech reports, automatic sprinkler calculations, in a file that is appropriately named as to its contents in an unsecured PDF file.
- Statements of Special Inspection. For projects where special inspections are required, provide a complete statement that includes a schedule with the scope and frequency noted; signatures by the Design Professional and Owner; and Resumes/Qualifications/Contact Information for special inspectors.
- Resubmissions and Revisions where answering comments to correction letters...remember to circle or cloud the areas **in red** on all affected plan sheets. The transmittal and/or cover letter shall discuss in detail as to how each individual correction item was corrected and/or addressed.
- Coordinate submitting revised and/or additional documents. Different design professionals and/or contractors may submit at different times for plan revisions, shop drawings, and deferred/phased submittals. Coordinate the submission of these items so there are not overlapping submittals in the review schedule. Contact the department prior to submitting so that a coordinated set can be placed in the plan review queue.