



## Non-Residential Construction

**Chapter 1, section 105.1 of the California Building Code (CBC) states:**  
**“Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system shall obtain the required permit.”**

The life cycle of a building begins with new construction, when a new building is constructed on a piece of land where there is no existing building. Once a building has been built, construction activities can be undertaken to change the building. Different types of construction activities occur as a nonresidential building moves through its life cycle - from maintenance and operations, replacement, tenant improvements, shell projects that include tenant improvements, additions, and new construction. The major distinction is between tenant improvements and shell projects.

Most renovation and remodeling are done in response to tenancy changes, either changes in the occupancy of a space or changes in tenants' needs that require changes to the space or the size of the space.

There are other reasons for remodeling and renovation, such as freshening the look of the space or upgrading the quality or functionality of the space. However, such changes are usually done in conjunction with a tenancy change. Most remodeling and renovation activities are focused on the interior.

**WHO CAN PREPARE PLANS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS:** The preparation of plans, specifications, or instruments of service for any building, except as described below, by any person who is not licensed to practice architecture in this state, is a misdemeanor punishable as provided in Section 5536 of the Business and Professions Code.

- Nonstructural or Nonseismic storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, or other appliances or equipment.
- Any nonstructural or nonseismic alterations or additions to any building necessary to or attendant upon the installation of those storefronts, interior alterations or additions, fixtures, cabinetwork, furniture, appliances, or equipment, provided those alterations do not change or affect the structural system or safety of the building.
- A licensed contractor, while engaged in the business of contracting for the installation of electrical, plumbing or mechanical systems or facilities, may design those systems or facilities in accordance with applicable construction codes and standards for work to be performed and supervised by that contractor within the classification for which his or her license is issued, or prepare electrical or mechanical shop or field drawings for work which he or she has contracted to perform, per section 6737.3 of the Business and Professions Code. Nothing in this section is intended to imply that a licensed contractor may design work which is to be installed by another person.

For more information on the Plan Requirements and Review process, [click here](#).

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:** Submission of incomplete plans to the City results in undue plan checking delays and lengthy back check times for both the applicant and city staff. The current edition of the California Building Code, Chapter 1, section 107.2.1 states: “Construction documents shall be of sufficient clarity to indicate location, nature and extent of the work proposed and show in detail that it will conform to the provisions of this code and all relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.”