



CITY OF HAYWARD'S TIGER PROGRAM

(**TIGER** - Tenant Improvement Guidelines for Expedited Review)

This expedited plan review program is designed to aid small business in obtaining building permits for proposed tenant improvement projects. The City of Hayward's Building and Fire Prevention Divisions are mandated to enforce the California Building and Fire Codes to ensure the minimum health and fire life safety standards are followed. Obtaining a construction permit, especially for small businesses, can seem time-consuming and confusing to customers who are not familiar with the process. To help small business owners, the City of Hayward is proud to offer the **TIGER** program. This is an **expedited plan review program** at no additional costs to small business owners. In addition, the Building, Fire, and Economic Development Divisions offer a pre-site meeting of the proposed business location to discuss any issues with the location and additional modifications that could be necessary based on the building and or the proposed use. You may contact the Economic Development Division at EconDev@hayward-ca.gov or (510) 583-5545 to schedule a meeting.

Important: Prior to preparing any plans for your proposed tenant improvement or applying for this program, you should contact the City's Planning Division to verify your proposed use is allowed in the space of the intended business. For further information you can contact Planning at planning.division@hayward-ca.gov or (510) 583-4216.

The **TIGER** program was created to provide customers and their designers with a more hands on approach with a Building Division staff member to review the plans for minor and moderate commercial Tenant Improvements (TI) and demolitions. The typical plan review process can take about three to four weeks for the initial review once submitted. Additionally, subsequent reviews are often necessary on most projects to obtain a code-compliant set of plans for TI projects. If your project qualifies for the **TIGER** program, the City's goal will be to review your project within **10 business days** of application submittal completeness (once a complete set of plans are submitted and review fees are paid). If further review is necessary, review staff will be available to discuss plan review comments in the hope that comments are properly address and the project could be approved after the second review.

Eligibility for the **TIGER** program will be based on the following:

- **Minor Tenant Improvements** – Minor interior alterations for business, mercantile, office, or low-hazard storage occupancies under 3,000 square feet with an occupant load of less than 50 people. These may include, for example, beauty salons, retail stores, or offices with minimal interior alterations. To qualify for Minor Tenant Improvements, the proposed occupancy (use) cannot be for the purposes of assembly, educational, factory, institutional, hazardous, or special use occupancies. In addition, there must be no exterior or structural work. On a case-by-case basis, this may also include existing large warehouse buildings proposing new office space up to 3,000 square feet and/or storage racking proposals.

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- **Moderate Tenant Improvements** – Moderate interior alterations for business, retail, or mercantile uses, not more than 5,000 square feet in area, that have an occupant load of less than 50 and does not exceed two stories in height or have a second-floor height exceeding 15 feet from the lowest fire department access point. These projects may include, for example, storage, retail, and food establishments without a new Type I Hood (e.g., coffee houses, yogurt shops, sandwich shops, etc.), with minimum interior and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing alterations. To qualify for Moderate Tenant Improvement, there must be no exterior or structural work, and no hazardous or special use occupancies (exterior façade changes necessary as part of the T.I. must be permitted separately). Other occupancies/uses would be reviewed for acceptance into the program on a case-by-case basis.
- **Please note:** some projects that fit into this program for building permits may require separate permits from other city divisions and departments such as the Planning division, fire department, Public Works & Utilities and/or the County’s environmental health department. These permits may take additional time to review and approve and may delay the issuance of building permits.

*The following projects **are not eligible** for the **TIGER** program:*

- New buildings or additions, or projects involving exterior or structural work. Tenant Improvements that require exterior work may still qualify on a case-by-case basis if the exterior work can be permitted under separate permits. These permits may delay issuance of your building permit if such permits are not able to be deferred.
- Projects with hazardous materials that would be classified as a hazardous occupancy.
- Larger food establishments or assembly occupancies. For example, new food establishments with a new or remodeled kitchen and/or a type-1 hood, and/or occupancies where the occupant load exceeds 49 people. Existing restaurants with only proposed interior seating and lobby configuration changes may qualify on a case-by-case basis, based on the scope of proposed work.
- Demolitions or renovations requiring Bay Area Air Quality District review (e.g., asbestos removal).

Application and Submittal Process:

Contact the Building Division at **(510) 583-4005** and ask to speak with the Building Official to discuss the proposed project and TIGER program eligibility. The Building Official will verify if your project is eligible and determine if it is a minor or moderate tenant improvement. If the project qualifies, you will be directed to submit your plans and application package online through the Building Division’s e-permits portal. If it qualifies, be sure to note on the application, under the project description, TIGER program submittal for [Business Name], [project description]”. Please see the application submittal requirements (under Documents and Reports –Tenant Improvements) [HERE](#)



**Turn-Around Time:**

Most interior demolition projects can be issued within a few business days (demolition over 1,000 square feet, within historical buildings, or buildings containing asbestos will require review by other departments and may take longer to approve). Projects exceeding a valuation of \$75,000 must create a waste management plan. Please see the following web page for more detail [construction-and-demolition-debris-disposal](#)

The TI projects qualified and submitted under the TIGER Program will be reviewed within **10 business days or less**. Depending on the complexity and completeness of the submittal documents, it may be possible to issue a permit after the first review. Projects that need a resubmittal to address corrections will be discussed with the design professionals and if the adjustments cannot be annotated (redlined) on the plans during the initial review, a second review will take place within **5 business days** once revised plans are submitted. If all corrections have been resolved during the second review, a permit can be issued at that time. If the projects need other department or division reviews, the permit will be issued after obtaining approvals from all the reviewing departments/divisions.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is considered a Small Business?

A. For this program, a Small Business is a California based, independently owned and operated enterprise (not controlled by a larger company) that employs fewer than 100 employees, with gross annual receipts less than \$15 million.

Q. I have a limited budget. Do I need to hire an architect or engineer to design and draw my plans?

A. Yes. All TI plans shall be prepared and stamped by a licensed architect or engineer. While there are a few exceptions for very minor alterations per the Business and Professions Code, an architect or engineer should take the lead on your project and should be familiar with the permit process. They also speak “code language” and, as a result, the person can prepare a more comprehensive set of plans and, in many cases, offer suggestions on how to save money during construction. Additionally, California law requires that if the tenant space will have employees or customers, an architect or engineer is required to prepare the drawings. Furthermore, a licensed professional will be able to further assist in understanding other potential issues, such as disabled access.

Q. Can I contact the Building Division staff before I schedule an appointment to learn more about what is needed?

A. Yes. Simply call us at, **(510) 583-4005**, and one of our staff members will inform you and your design team about the submittal requirements and answer any other questions you may have. For TI submittal requirements, refer to the City’s Building Division website [HERE](#)





Q. I am going to do some interior demolition as well as new work. Do I need separate permits?

A. Not necessarily. You can apply for a demolition and interior improvement permit on one application, but it is our recommendation to apply for two separate permits, one for the TI and another one for the demolition. This way, in the event the TI plans need additional review, the demolition permit can be issued independently, and you can begin the demolition portion of your project.

Q. What are some of the conditions that can delay my project and how can I prepare for those?

A. Plans that are complete and meet code compliance go through the permit process quickly. Those that have missing items or do not comply with the City's current codes and ordinances (fire, exiting, accessibility, structural, health, etc.) will require additional review time. The goal of the City's Building and Fire Prevention Divisions is to provide a safe place for you, your employees, and your customers. This requires that any code issues be identified quickly (preferably during the plan review process when revisions are less costly) and resolved before issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

Q. I am going to open up a food service establishment. Will this type of occupancy qualify for the TIGER Program?

A. It might, if it fits the guidelines for a moderate TI as noted above. However, most food service establishments require a more complex review and need approval from other agencies such as the County Health Department and additional permits from other City Departments. Although, some smaller food establishments, such as a coffee house or yogurt shop without a Type I Hood may be eligible. In any case, it is recommended that you contact the Alameda County Environmental Health Division before submitting to the City.

Q. My building is larger than 5,000 square feet, but the area of my proposed tenant improvement is less than 5,000 square feet, do I still qualify?

A. If your proposed project meets the criteria as noted for Minor or Moderate tenant improvements, then it is likely your project will qualify. However, fire sprinkler modifications may be required.

