



COMMERCIAL RESTAURANT PERMITTING PROCESS

Helping you choose a location best for your needs

What is the number one fact you need to know to when opening a restaurant in the City of Tucson?

That Arizona State laws requires the services of a Licensed Design Professional (Architect) and a Licensed Contractor for any construction work on a commercial project including your restaurant if it entails more than just carpet or paint.

I'm moving into a former restaurant location:

Scenario: No construction work is being done in the space, but the restaurant menu is changing along with the business name. *

Planning and Development Services (PDS) has minimal requirements for this scenario, however you will be required to work with Pima County Health Department and possibly Pima County Wastewater. It is recommended that you check with both County departments first prior to submitting to PDS. A new menu requires submittal to the Health department accompanied by a set of plans for review. If their review results in additional requirements (new sink or floor drains, etc.), this scenario will no longer apply since that involves construction work.

1. Provide a copy of the last Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) or last approved Site plan showing the former restaurant occupied the space. (check with your landlord or City PDS records section)
2. Sign in at the Structural counter, and plan review staff will verify your documents to the Building Code occupancy in that space. Once verified, staff will stamp your documents and confirm no new C of O is required. You will be directed to Zoning.
3. Sign in at Zoning counter and staff will verify the use is allowed in the zone. If approved to both the PDS Land Use and Building codes, PDS has cleared you to open your business. **

I'm moving into a space that was an old office and needs work:

Scenario: Work is required to add a kitchen, more walls, new seating and bathrooms. My menu is brand new.

1. Prior to signing a lease it is recommended that you visit PDS to verify zoning and occupancy for a restaurant. Zoning and Structural will ask for a copy of the last C of O or the last approved Site plan and discuss the location with you. If zoning and building codes allow, a Licensed Design Professional will be required to design the plans to the current building code and a licensed contractor will be required to perform the work. You will also be submitting these documents and a copy of your restaurant menu to Pima County Health Department. Again you are encouraged to check with the Health Department first.
2. The last approved Site plan and 2 copies of the newly designed building plans need to be submitted to PDS along with a Code Data Analysis Sheet for review and approval by Zoning, Building Code, Fire, Water and Wastewater. Review timeline is approximately 20 days per submittal until all comments are approved. Comments are publicly available and may be viewed on our website: www.tucsonaz.gov/PRO
3. If you will be adding additional square feet to the existing structure, Impact Fees will apply and a separate Grading permit may be required (which can be reviewed concurrently). Building Permits can't be issued until a Grading permit is approved and issued.

PDS will notify the applicant once the plans are approved and ready to be issued a permit **. PDS will require the following from the person securing the permit:

1. A copy of the paid Wastewater receipt from Pima County (if applicable).
2. A letter from the Licensed Contractor stating they are the Contractor of Record along with their Bond Exemption Certificate.
3. Any Special Inspection forms required from the Architect on the building plans.
4. Payment for the permit. (Cash, check, Visa, MC & Discover accepted) Payment for Impact Fees can not be taken with a credit card.

* If the menu isn't changing, a health review may not be required.

** A City of Tucson Business License is required to open a restaurant and any signs posted require separate sign permits.

Helpful links:

[Planning & Development Svcs](#)
[Special Inspection Forms](#)
[Code Data Analysis sheet](#)
[Commercial Plan Review Checklist](#)
[Impact Fees](#)
[Administrative Forms](#)
[Bond Exemption Form](#)
[Sign Permits](#)
[PDS Records](#)
[Grading Permit information](#)
[Pima County Health Dept](#)
[Pima County Wastewater](#)

Track your progress
[Property Research Online](#)