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This guide explains the requirements for furniture installations at USC. Suppliers should familiarize themselves with these requirements and adhere to them whenever they are engaged in a furniture installation at the university.

Loose furniture installations

Loose furniture (i.e., not attached to a floor, wall or ceiling; easily moveable) is allowed nearly anywhere and does not require plan check or permit, with the following exceptions:

- Loose furniture should not be placed where it will reduce an aisle to less than a 36-inch clearance (in some cases, a wider aisle is required, but 36 inches is the normal requirement).

- Loose furniture should not be placed within a 60-inch by 60-inch zone on the side of a door opening where the door opens into that zone. The opposite side of a door opening must have a 48-inch by 48-inch clear zone. These zones are not an exact quote from the building code, but are a condensed "rule of thumb" that incorporates several different code requirements related to clearances at door openings.

- Loose furniture may not be placed in exit corridors or lobbies, including main entrance lobbies and elevator lobbies. There may be some exceptions to this requirement, but USC's Capital Construction Department (CCD) must be consulted on a case-by-case basis to make the determination.

Fixed furniture installations

Fixed furniture (i.e., attached in some manner to a floor, wall or ceiling, or of a weight or configuration making the furniture difficult to move) is allowed subject to the following:

- Cubicles, movable or temporary partition walls, glass walls, cases, counters, etc., are allowed without plan check or permit as long as they are no taller (measured from the floor) than 69 inches AND the configuration of such items does not violate any other code requirements for aisle widths, exit pathways, encroachment in mandatory clear floor areas and similar. Anything taller than 69 inches, or which may violate some other provision of the code as noted above MUST be submitted to the City of Los Angeles for plan check and permit (this is specifically spelled out in the building code).

- All of the same clearances are required as noted in **Loose furniture installations**, above. In some cases the clearances may need to be even greater. CCD will have to be consulted so that a determination can be made.

- Subject to many restrictions, fixed furniture can sometimes be placed in exit corridors and lobbies. CCD absolutely has to be consulted for a determination.

- Items taller than 69 inches, including even those with a pre-approved Research Report (see box below) will require detailed drawings, clear indication of aisles and exit paths, identification and drawing of the entire disabled access pathway through the building to/from the building entrance and all the way to the required disabled parking space on campus. **This typically means that an architect has to be hired to prepare and assemble the necessary documentation to submit for plan check and permit.** In all cases of this type, CCD must be consulted.

Building plan check and building permit

A building plan check is **required** prior to obtaining a building permit if the installation a part of any of the following:

- A new building or structure;
- Addition to a building;
- Structural alteration to building;
- Interior modification/change of floor plan (i.e., cubicle layouts (see furniture requirements above), removing or adding walls);
- Walls, partitions (including modular or temporary partitions and cubicles), counters and cases that are over 69 inches tall as measured from the floor surface.

A building permit is **required** when the installation is part of a larger project that involves building, constructing, remodeling, repairing, demolishing, removing or moving any building or structure, including garages, patios, fences, accessory buildings, etc.

A building permit is **not required** when:

- The installation cost (excluding the cost of the furniture) is less than $300, unless it affects the structural stability, life safety of the occupancy or the work will change the occupancy (i.e., converting office space to assembly space).

- Cases, counters and partitions are not over 69 inches tall (see requirements for building plan check above), unless they alter exit paths or violate other portions of the code, such as disabled access, etc.

Cubicles and modular partitions allowed by code and less than 69 inches in height do not require a building plan check or building permit, unless the installation violates some other code requirement, such as disabled access clearances, exiting requirements, etc.

Cubicles and modular partitions that are taller than 69 inches in height are also allowed by code, but must be plan-checked by the City and a building permit must be issued. Special problems with cubicles and partitions taller than 69 inches may include:

- Blocking view of exit signs and exit pathways (must be treated as an enclosed room)
- Altering required performance of:
    o HVAC system (air flow and circulation)
    o Fire sprinkler systems
    o Lighting systems
- Not meeting requirements for:
    o Distribution of electrical power
    o Structural stability (i.e., resistance to turning over in an earthquake)

Cubicles and partitions of any height must have approved electrical connections

Contacts

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