



Fire Department Planning Approvals

Under the San Jose Municipal Code, the Fire Department Development Services Division reviews nearly all construction projects, in partnership with the Building Division and the Planning Division of PBCE. All Fire reviews are done in the interest of both the occupants and of the Fire Department and other emergency responders.

For some areas, the review must be completed and approved during the Planning stage, as opposed to the Permitting stage. The purpose of this information bulletin is to highlight issues critical to Fire during the Planning stage.

The goal of the Fire Department is to have the following issues resolved before Planning approval:

- Fire Apparatus Access (SJFC Section 503 as amended, plus design guidelines)
- Fire Flow (SJFC Section 508 and Appendix B) –generally based on building size and type of construction
- Fire Hydrant Locations (SJFC Section 508 and Appendix C) – note 400-foot maximum distance

If the project does not meet these requirements, the applicant has the option to apply for a Variance, and propose alternate means of mitigations for the Fire Code non-compliance. Any of these Variances must be approved prior to Planning approval.

For Fire Flow and Hydrant Locations, the **building size & construction type** is necessary to determine the requirements. Applicants need to provide this information on the cover sheet. Absent that information, Fire review defaults to Type VB.

In the **Initial** Fire Planning review memos, Fire addresses these 3 major requirements (access, fire flow & hydrants), and will also comment about laddering if the project appears to have major issues. When these three major requirements are addressed, Fire will produce a **Final** Fire memo stating that **access, fire flow and hydrants have been approved**. (TECHNICAL NOTE: There is also a “result” in AMANDA in the “Process” tab for Fire that reads “**Access and Fire Flow Approved.**” This is the “Green Light” to Planning that Fire is okay for the project to go through the Building submittal process.)

For further information, please see additional Fire Department handouts, which are posted on our website.

David Schoonover, Deputy Fire Chief & Fire Marshal