

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Mechanical Permits

Updated June 26, 2024

This Tip summarizes the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) requirements for mechanical permits requiring plan review. Permit applicants are encouraged to read this document before submitting an application, as the plans and information detailed in this Tip are required.

TYPES OF MECHANICAL PERMITS

SDCI issues five types of mechanical permits:

- **Mechanical Routed (Full C)** - for projects valued at more than \$50,000. These require a mechanical engineer's signature and stamp.
- **Mechanical Expedited (Full +)** - for projects valued at \$50,000 or less with multiple reviews (eg: Ordinance/Structural, Zoning, Noise).
- **Mechanical Expedited (Full)** - for projects valued at \$50,000 or less with Mech reviews only.
- **Subject-to-Field-Inspection (STFI)** - for projects valued at \$50,000 or less; see **Tip 414**, *STFI Mechanical Permits for Commercial and Multifamily Residential*
- **Over-the-Counter (OTC) Mechanical** - for single-family or duplex mechanical projects, see **Tip 104**, *Getting an OTC (Over-the-Counter) Permit*

You can apply for all types of mechanical permits through the Seattle Services Portal, <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/>.

OVERVIEW OF REQUIRED INFORMATION

The following types of information are required by SDCI in order to consider applications for mechanical permits. If any required information is not included, the application may not be accepted.

YOU MUST SUBMIT A COMPLETE SET OF PLANS, which include the items detailed below and in the following pages:

1. General Information

- Year of code this permit complies with.
- Vicinity map (see **Example 1**).
- Site plan, which must be to scale and fully dimensioned using minimum scale of 1/8" = 1" or 1" = 10'. All other detail plans must be 1/4" = 1' or larger. (Must show adjacent zoning; see **Example 4**.)
- Legal description of the property.
- Assessor's Parcel Number.
- Legend/abbreviation, general notes, and drawing title block (see **Examples 2 and 3**).
- Statement of financial responsibility when project exceeds \$50,000.
- Building identification number for all surrounding buildings (see Director's Rule (DR) 8-2000) if there are more than two buildings on the site.
- When architectural drawings are used, label them as mechanical drawings and remove all architectural information that does not pertain to this mechanical permit.
- All reference drawings shall be labelled as reference drawings.
- Minimum size shall be 18" x 18".
- All plans must have a minimum of 1/8" lettering.
- All plans must be scannable and easy to read.
- Any related Building Permit numbers.

2. Zoning Code Information to be added to site plan

- A. If equipment, ductwork, or louver is installed outside the building, such as on the rooftop, ground or exterior wall, provide the following zoning information:**



- Distance of equipment, exterior ductwork, and louvers from all property lines
- Distance of equipment, exterior ductwork, and louvers from all surrounding buildings
- Distance of equipment, exterior ductwork, and louvers from all adjoining walls
- Height of exhaust or other louvers above sidewalks
- Zoning of adjacent properties (see **Example 4**)
- Width of adjacent rights-of-way (e.g., streets, alleys)

B. If equipment is on the roof, provide the following information:

- Building elevation drawing showing the height from existing and finished grade to top of roof and to top of proposed mechanical equipment (see **Example 6**).
- Show parapet or screening, if applicable.
- Show plan view of rooftop equipment.
- Show roof coverage calculation (square footage and percentage) for all new and existing equipment and structures, such as stair penthouses. (See pg. 7.)
- Include dimensioned open space plan and calculation, if required residential open space is being displaced by installation of equipment.
- Include floor area ratio (FAR) calculations, if site is in a commercial, downtown, or industrial zone. See specific zone for exemptions from FAR for structure existing as of specific dates.

C. If mechanical equipment is to be installed in a parking garage, it may not displace a required parking space. Provide the following information:

- Required parking calculation. A complete parking plan will be required if the layout is changed to accommodate the equipment.
- On plans, show location and dimensions of mechanical equipment in the parking garage.

D. If the property is within 200 feet of the shoreline, the project may be subject to shoreline development regulations, and the permit time frame may be different. Provide the following information:

- Include a copy of any shoreline exemption you have received.
- Show shoreline setback line location on the site plan and on the rooftop plan view.

E. If your project is on a landmark building or in an historic or special review district, contact the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) at

(206) 684-0228 for assistance. Provide the following at application:

- Proof of application to DON for Mechanical Routed (Full C) permits and DON written approval on plans for Mechanical Expedited (Full) permits.

F. If you want to install equipment and ductwork in the public right-of-way (e.g., alleys or sidewalks), contact Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) at (206) 684-5283. Provide the following information at application:

- SDOT Street Use permit

For additional information on the zoning requirements in this section, please submit your question at https://sdci.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new?ticket_form_id=1500003356822.

3. Noise Code Information

Equipment installed on the roof, on the ground, outside the building, at an exterior wall, or inside the building may transmit noise to an exterior wall through duct and/or louver. The following noise information is required:

- Noise rating per ARI 270 (LWA) on equipment schedule.
- An acoustic report is generally required. However, if the estimated equipment sound pressure level (dBA) at the nearest property lines is equal to or less than the requirement listed in Table 1, an acoustic report may not be required. The sound pressure level at the property line may be estimated by applying the distance factor listed in Table 2 to the equipment LWA noise rating.

SDCI can require additional acoustic reports if there is an existing exterior mechanical system installed or the applicant's property has a history of mechanical equipment noise complaints.

Example 1 (Commercial to Commercial zoning):

Existing and proposed HVAC systems on a commercial building have a total rating of 84 dB (LWA) and are 40 feet from the nearest commercial property line. The distance correction factor is 29 dB (See Table 2.) $84 \text{ dBA} - 29 \text{ dBA} = 55 \text{ dBA}$ and the resulting sound level is below the 60 dBA allowable limit and therefore complies with SMC 25.08.410

Example 2 (Commercial to Residential zoning):

Existing and proposed HVAC systems on a commercial building have a total rating of 84 dB (LWA) and the nearest residentially zoned property line is 40 feet away. The distance correction factor is 29 dB (See Table 2) $84 \text{ dBA} - 29 \text{ dBA} = 55 \text{ dBA}$ and the resulting sound

level is below the daytime limit of 57 dBA but will not be in compliance after 10:00 p.m. This is because residentially-zoned receiving properties require a 10 dB drop in the allowable exterior limits after 10:00 p.m. For this example, the allowable limit is 47 dBA after 10:00 p.m. and therefore some form of sound mitigation will be required to achieve compliance.

Example 3 (Commercial to Residential zoning): Existing HVAC systems on a commercial building are rated at 76 dB (LWA) and are 40 feet from the nearest residentially zoned property line. A new piece of equipment is proposed that generates 66 dB (LWA). The 2 sources cumulatively generate 76 dB LWA. The distance correction factor is 29 dB (See Table 2) 76 dB – 29 dB = 47 dB. This means the submittal fully complies with SMC 25.08.410.

For more information on noise in commercial projects, visit SDCI's Noise Code website at [www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/noise-code](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/noise-code), or call a Noise Abatement Coordinator at (206) 615-1190, (206) 615-1394, or (206) 615-1760.

Table 1. Maximum Permissible Sound Levels*

District of Sound Source	District of Receiving Property		
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial
Residential	55 dB	57 dB	60 dB
Commercial	57 dB	60 dB	65 dB
Industrial	60 dB	65 dB	70 dB

*Levels must be reduced by 10 dB 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. when receiving property is in a residential district.

Table 2. Distance Factor

Distance in feet from equipment to property line	dB reduction from equipment sound Rating (ARI 270)
2	3
3	7
4	10
5	12
6	13
7	14
8	15
9	16
10	17
15	21
20	23
25	25
30	27
40	29
50	31
60	33
70	34
80	35
90	36
100	37

4. Mechanical and Energy Code Information

Please highlight all mechanical work on the following documents under this permit and provide the following information:

- Plan view (see **Example 5**)
- Elevation view (see **Example 6**)
- Section/detail view
- Equipment schedule (see **Example 7**)
- Heating and cooling load calculation
- Commercial kitchen hood worksheet, if applicable

When commercial kitchen hood ventilation system is included in the scope of work, please provide the following:

- A separate kitchen hood worksheet for each hood exhaust system

- A description of work that indicates a commercial kitchen hood ventilation system is included
- A note on the drawing stating "Commercial kitchen hood ventilation system permit application will be submitted separately." when ONLY the exhaust duct is included in the scope of work

Forms are available at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/forms.

5. Building Code Information

For projects involving equipment weighing more than 400 pounds, the following information is required, unless the equipment is installed on the ground:

- Show transfer of equipment load to the nearest supporting element, such as roof joist to bearing wall or to beam and column system. Also show seismic restraints as required. See SDCI DR 29-2005.
- Structural calculation with structural engineer's stamp. (Note: All structural details must be included on the plans.)
- For replacement equipment, state the weight of the old and new equipment on the plans, and show the old and new location of the replacement equipment. If the new equipment weight is equal or less than the existing, and in the same location, structural calculations will not be required.
- If the structure supporting the frame requires special inspections (such as high strength epoxy bolting, structural steel welding, cast in place concrete over 2500 PSI (other than slab on grade)) include a SDCI nomination letter signed by the owner and specify an approved agency. (Contractor may not sign this form.)
- For projects with new ductwork, provide architectural plans showing the location of corridors and other fire-rated construction. Copies of these drawings from the original permit are acceptable.

6. Fire Code Information

The Seattle Fire Department will review projects with the following equipment. Provide the following information:

- High-rise shell and core mechanical system (not including tenant improvement mechanical system)
- High-rise fire and life safety equipment, such as
 - Smoke management systems: provide schematic drawings, design parameters and activation matrix.

- Stair and elevator pressurization fans: identify on drawings and provide schematic drawings.

- Emergency generator. Provide fuel tank, fuel venting line, and fuel fill plan.
- Fume hood. See SDCI DR 30-2005. Provide hazardous material inventory statement (HMIS).
- Spray paint booth. Provide spray booth detailed drawings and ventilation calculations.
- Fuel tank of any size and located anywhere.
- Mechanical ventilation systems for any group H occupancy, e.g., chemical storage room, battery room, repair garage, paint manufacturing area, etc.

For additional fire information, call the Fire Department at (206) 386-1443.

7. Additional Permits Required

- Boiler and/or pressure vessel. For applicable forms and assistance, call SDCI OTC Permits at (206) 684-8464. OTC forms are also available at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/forms.
- Refrigeration system such as split system cooling equipment, chiller, DX system, refrigerant piping (does not include self-contained refrigeration system). For forms or assistance call (206) 684-8464 or visit the web address highlighted above.
- Plumbing. Call King County at (206) 684-5198.
- Water heater. Call King County at (206) 684-5198.
- Gas piping. Call King County at (206) 684-5198.
- Sprinkler system. A building permit is required. Call the ASC at (206) 684-8850.
- Equipment and ductwork installed in the public right-of-way (e.g., alley or sidewalk). A Street Use Permit from SDOT is required; call (206) 684-5283.
- Fuel storage tank of any size. Obtain a combustible liquid permit from the Fire Department; call (206) 386-1450.
- Paint spray booth of any size. Obtain a spray finishing permit from the Fire Department, (206) 386-1450.
- Electrical wiring to HVAC system. Obtain an electrical permit. Contact SDCI OTC Permits at www.seattle.gov/sdci/about-us/contact-us.
- Low voltage control wiring system. Obtain a low voltage electrical permit for each system. Call SDCI OTC Permits (206) 684-8464.
- Fume hood. A building permit is required for a fume hood, unless the existing establishment is a

lab or hospital. For information about changing a use, call the ASC at (206) 684-8850.

- Commercial kitchen hood. A building permit to change the use may be required if the building or space is not already established as a food preparation establishment (e.g., restaurant) in Seattle DCI's records. For permit information, call the ASC at (206) 684-8850. To schedule a Fire Department inspection of the hood fire suppression system or to obtain a fire suppression permit, call (206) 386-1443.
- Hydronic waterloop heating system for other than single family/duplex occupancy shall apply for a mechanical permit per this Tip document.

FEES

Your application will not be accepted until you pay your fees. For fee information, see our online "Fees" page at [www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/fees](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/fees) or contact our Public Resource Center at (206) 684 8467.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Permit applicants are encouraged to read the SDCI documents listed below before submitting an application. See the Access to Information box below for details on obtaining these publications.

Tips

- **Tip 103**, *Site Plan Requirements*
- **Tip 103A**, *Site Plan Guidelines*
- **Tip 104**, *Getting an OTC (Over-the-Counter) Permit*
- **Tip 106**, *General Standards for Plans and Drawings*
- **Tip 209**, *Master Use Permit Application Requirements for Shoreline Permits*
- **Tip 209A**, *Shoreline Substantial Development Exemptions Application Instructions*
- **Tip 406**, *Outdoor Air Quality in the Puget Sound Area and Building Ventilation Implications*
- **Tip 414**, *STFI Mechanical Permits for Commercial and Multifamily Residential*
- **Tip 418**, *User's Guide to Achieving a Fire-Rated Shaft with YYET Products*
- **Tip 419**, *Commissioning Requirements in the Seattle Energy Code "Commercial Building" Provisions*

Director's Rules (DRs)

- **DR 7-2007**: Determination of Residential Setbacks in the Shoreline District
- **DR 8-2000**: Building Identification Plan Requirement for Properties Having More than Two Buildings
- **DR 9-2003**: Exemptions from Shoreline Program Permit Requirements

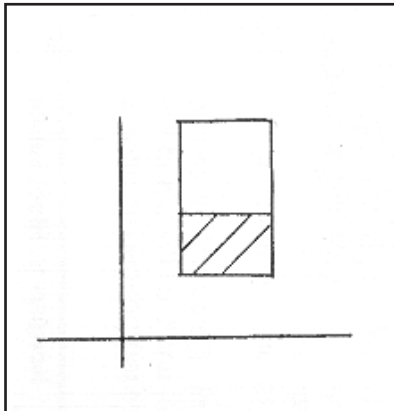
DR 16-2021: Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Hood and Ducts: Standard Alternatives For Exhaust Duct Termination at Locations Other than the Building Rooftop

- **DR 3-2009**: Variances from the Standards of the Noise Control Code SMC 25.08
- **DR 29-2005**: Structural Support of Ducts and Mechanical Equipment
- **DR 30-2005**: Ventilation Systems in Research and Educational Laboratories (Fume Hood)

Access to Information

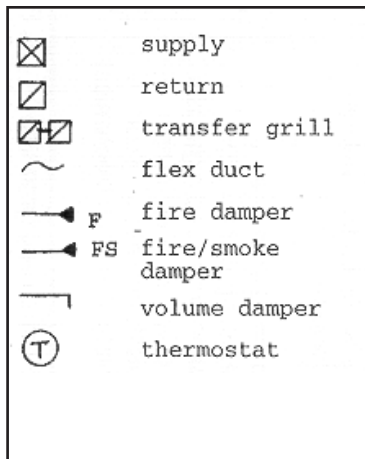
SDCI Tips, Director's Rules, and the Seattle Municipal Code are available on our website at www.seattle.gov/sdci. Worksheets and application forms are located at www.seattle.gov/sdci/permits/forms.

Example 1: Vicinity Map



Assessor's Parcel Number
 Legal Description
 Address

Example 2: Legend



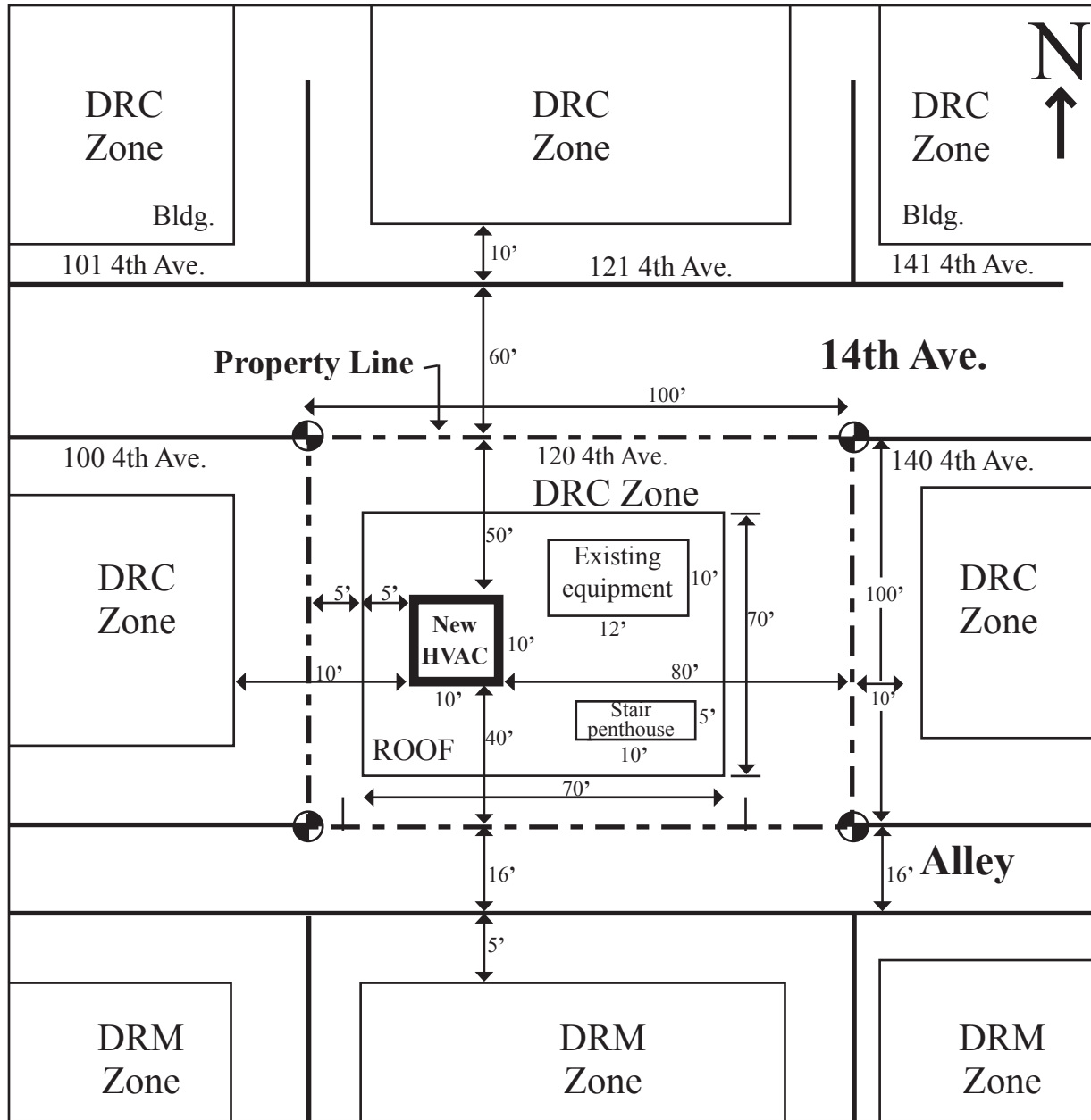
Example 3: General Notes and Title Block

1. Provide seven-day programmable thermostat.
2. Perform commissioning of HVAC equipment in accordance with Seattle energy code.
3. Outside air intake shall be 10' from exhaust outlet.

Drawing Title Block

Project Name
Project Address
Plan Date
M 1/1

Example 4. Site Plan with Mechanical Equipment Information

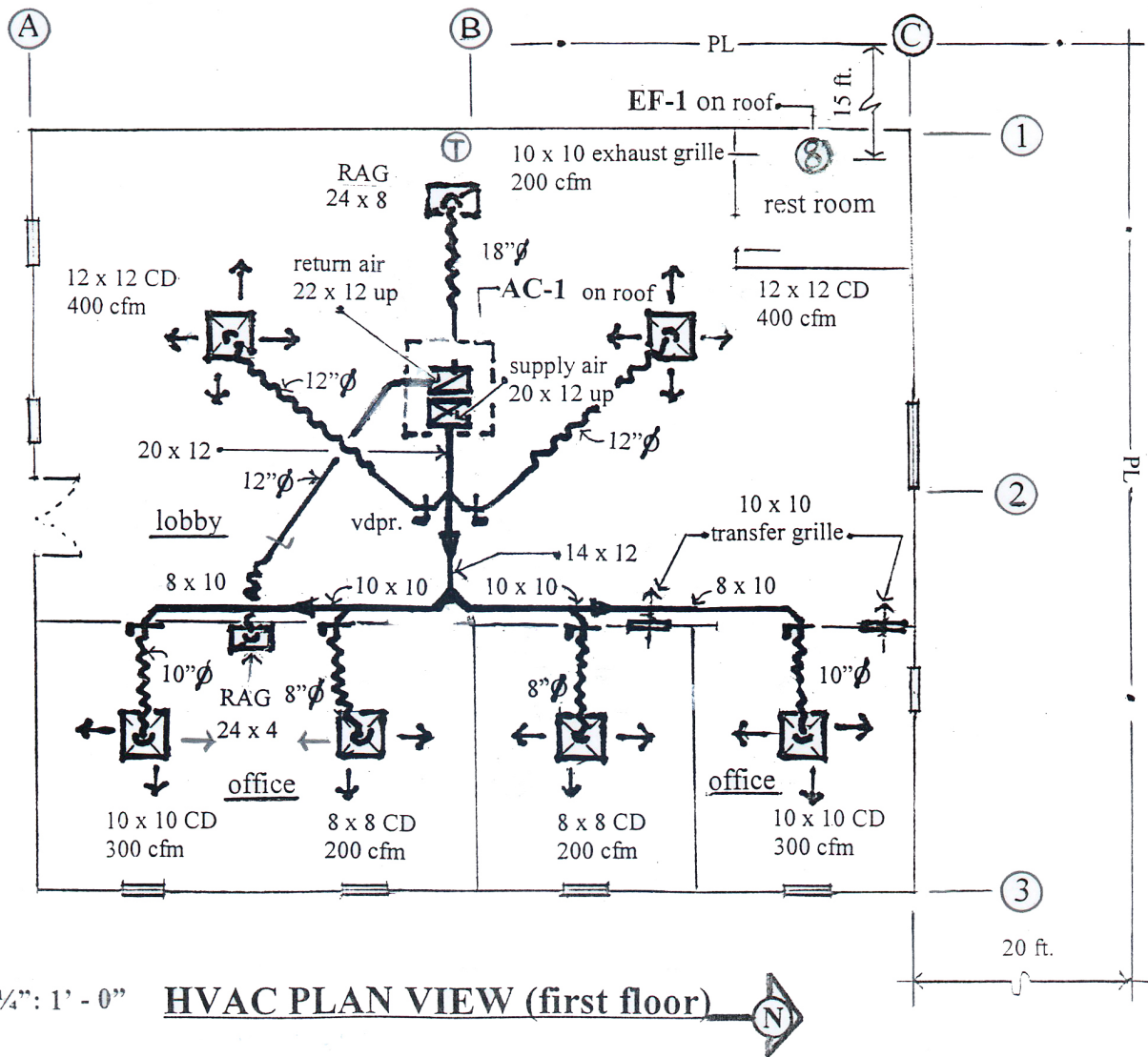


NOTE: drawings MUST be to scale on plans submitted with application (see item #4 under General Information on pg. 1).

Roof Coverage Calculation

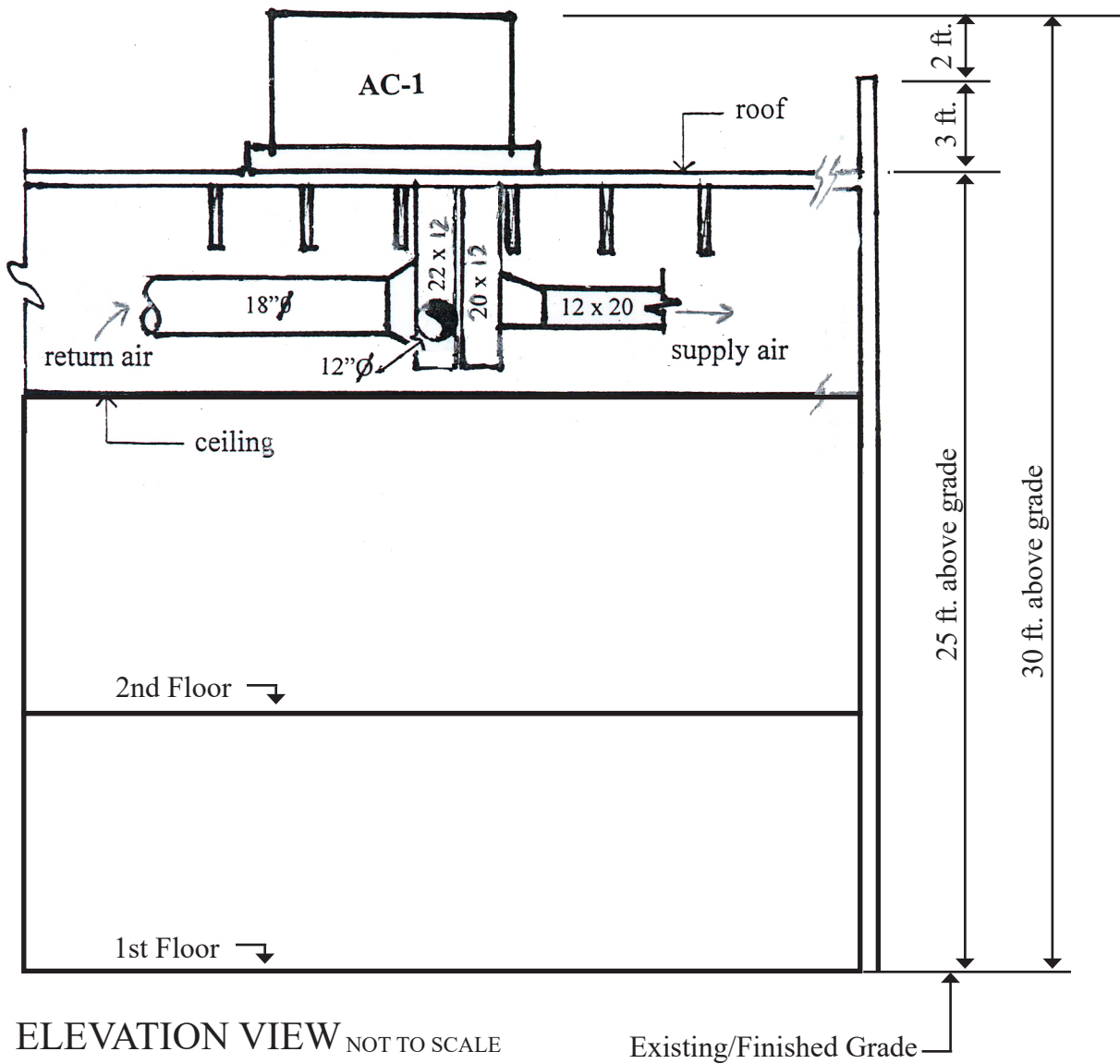
		New HVAC	Existing Equipment	Stair Penthouse		
Equipment + Structure on Roof	=	(10x10	+ 12x10	+ 5x10)		
Roof Area		70x70			x 100%	= 5.5%

Example 5. Plan View



Scale 1/4" = 1' - 0" **HVAC PLAN VIEW (first floor)**

Example 6. Elevation View



Example 7. Equipment Schedules

HVAC Equipment Schedule																	
Unit #	Brand Name	Model #	Nominal Tonnage	Total CFM	OSA CFM	ECON Cycle	SP	HP/BHP	COOLING			HEATING			LWA or SPL	Weight (lbs) ²	Location Service
									Total (BTUH)	Sensible (BTUH)	SEER/EER	IPLV	BTU/ft. ²	Input (BTUH)			
1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5																	
6																	

¹ Sound rating per ARI 270 or sound pressure level at given distance (include distance)
² Structural Support. Calculation: Total equipment weight 400 lbs. or more requires Professional Structural Engineer calculation and stamp.

Fan Equipment Schedule									
Unit #	Brand Name	Model #	CFM	SP	HP/BHP	LWA/SPL	Feature VAV/Const. vol./	VAV Type ²	Location Service
1									
2									
3									

¹ Sound rating per ARI 270 or sound pressure level at given distance (include distance)
² Per section 1438

Motorized Damper Schedule								
Damper #	Brand Name	Model #	Size	CFM	Motorize or gravity	Intake or Exhaust/relieve	System serve	Location
1								
2								
3								