

Cheat Sheet for School Construction Projects

May 2010



What are the requirements for my school construction project?

School construction projects can vary greatly in scope. However, the following are important to note:

- Regardless of the size or scope of the project, all building codes and local, state, and federal laws must be followed.
- A permit from the local jurisdiction is always required; and for new construction, additions, and renovations, a permit from the local or State Fire Marshal is also required.
- Typically, projects will require drawings and specifications. Even if an architect and/or engineer are not required, drawings and specifications help to ensure that the project is being bid consistently.
- Most projects will require the services of an architect and engineer. Refer to, “Is an Architect Required” and “Is an Engineer Required” below.
- All projects should be submitted to the State Department of Education for review. Projects are reviewed for compliance with school laws, accessibility standards, and building codes.
- All projects shall follow the Competitive Bidding Laws.

Can school personnel perform the work?

Yes. This is called force account. To build by force account, work must be done by a district employee. Building by force does not exempt the school from any laws, including code, permit and architect requirements. Also, when work, such as electrical, requires a license, the employee must hold a valid license to perform that work. If the entire project cannot be completed with district employees, the remainder should be contracted out as a public construction contract under the applicable provisions of the Public Competitive Bidding Act of 1974.

Is an Architect required?

1. Is the cost of the project \$158,000 or greater?
Yes: Architect Required
No: Refer to Question #2
2. Does the building addition, renovation or alteration affect the primary structural, mechanical or electrical systems, life-safety systems, or exit passageways?
Yes: Architect Required
No: Refer to Question #3
3. Is the occupancy Assembly (A-1), (A-4) or (A-5)? Assembly (A-1) includes areas for the production or viewing of performing arts, typically with fixed seating. Assembly (A-4) includes areas for viewing indoor sporting events and activities with spectator seating. Assembly (A-5) includes areas for participation in or viewing outdoor activities.
Yes: Architect Required
No: Refer to Question #4

4. Is the occupancy Education (E) (i.e., when the project is complete, students will have access to the building, addition, or renovated area)? Buildings on school grounds that students would not have access to include warehouses, maintenance buildings, bus barns, etc.
 Yes: Refer to Question #6
 No: Refer to Question #5
5. Is the occupancy Assembly (A-2) or (A-3)? Assembly (A-2) includes areas for food and drink consumption. Assembly (A-3) includes areas for worship, recreation, amusement, or other assembly areas not identified, such as indoor sporting areas without spectator seating, libraries, and galleries.
 Yes: Refer to Question #6
 No: This is not an occupancy typical to schools. An architect may still be required. Refer to the *Oklahoma State Architectural and Interior Designers Act* for further information.
6. Will there be more than 50 occupants (as calculated per code)?
 Occupants are calculated based on the International Building Code (IBC) Table 1004.1, and summarized as follows:
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| Assembly, concentrated (chairs--not fixed) | 7 net |
| Assembly, standing space | 5 net |
| Assembly, unconcentrated (tables and chairs) | 15 net |
| Educational, classroom area | 20 net |
| Educational, shops and vocational rooms | 50 net |
| Exercise rooms and locker rooms | 50 gross |
- Example 1: Renovation of (2) classrooms with a total area of renovation of 1,200 square feet
 1,200 SF / 20 net square feet per occupant = 60 occupants
- Example 2: Free standing metal building for baseball batting facility that is 40'-0" x 60'-0"
 2,400 SF / 50 gross square feet per occupant = 48 occupants
 Yes: Architect Required
 No: Refer to Question #7
7. Will the building be more than 2-stories in height?
 Yes: Architect Required
 No: An architect is not required for (E), (A-2) and (A-3) occupancies with fewer than 50 occupants and less than 2-stories in height.

Does my roof project require an Architect?

A roof project on a school building follows the same criteria as other school projects. Follow the questions listed in "Is an Architect Required" to determine if the roof project requires an architect. Generally, an architect will be required.

Is an Engineer required?

Any work, new or renovated, that requires design of civil, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, or structural systems, requires a licensed engineer. For example, replacing a furnace would not require an engineer, but adding additional duct-work to an existing system would require an engineer.

Can Construction Management or Construction Management at Risk be used?

Yes, both construction management (CM) and Construction Management at Risk (CMa) are legal construction delivery methods for school districts, but specific requirements must be met. First, unless the project is in response to a natural disaster or other emergency situation, construction management may only be used if the project benefits the public, there is a need for

cost control, and the need exists for specialized or complex construction methods due to the unique nature of the project. Second, the district must select a construction manager from the Department of Central Services' List of Registered Construction Managers. Finally, school districts are not allowed to serve as their own construction managers (Attorney General Opinion 13-2010, October 22, 2010).

Can Design-Build be used?

No, design-build is not a legal construction delivery method for school districts.

Do Competitive Bidding Laws apply?

1. Is the work for minor maintenance and repair only?
Yes: Refer to Question #3
No: Refer to Question #2

2. Is the cost greater than \$50,000?
Yes: Project shall be let and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, by open competitive bidding after solicitation for sealed bids, in accordance with the Competitive Bidding Act.
No: Project shall be let and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder by receipt of written bids.

3. For minor maintenance and repair, is the cost less than \$25,000?
Yes: Project may be negotiated with a qualified contractor.
No: Refer to Question #4

4. For minor maintenance and repair, is the cost greater than \$25,000, but less than \$50,000?
Yes: Project shall be let and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder by receipt of written bids.
No: Refer to Question #2