

# Pretreatment Reviews



This bulletin has been designed to assist you in applying for a Pretreatment Review with the Pierce County Sewer Utility Division. It contains information on the steps, requirements, and resources available to you through your application process. This document is a guide only and should not be misconstrued as a replacement or revision of the Pierce County Code and associated Sewer Utility design and construction standards.

## What gives Pierce County the authority to require a Pretreatment Review?

The Washington State Department of Ecology (WSDOE) has delegated to Pierce County the responsibility to review and approve engineering activities for sewerage collection and treatment systems under the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Pierce County has also been delegated by the State to administer a Federal-mandated pretreatment program (40 CRF Part 403) under the Clean Water Act.

Pierce County Code Chapters 13.04 (Pierce County Sanitary Sewer Utility Administrative Code) and 13.06 (Sewer Utility Prohibited Discharges and Industrial Pretreatment Regulations) further establish the local discharge limits and pretreatment regulations.

## When is a Pretreatment Review required?

All commercial businesses that are proposing to renovate, remodel, expand, or occupy existing tenant spaces or buildings, or construct new commercial buildings which are either connected to, or are applying to be connected to, the Pierce County Sanitary Sewer System are required to obtain Pretreatment Review approval prior to being issued a sewer service permit, obtaining a building permit or, when no other permits are required, occupying the building or tenant space. This includes:

- a) All new tenants/owners taking over an existing business with or without changes to the tenant space or building,
- b) All existing commercial tenants or commercial building owners adding a new use, new plumbing, or increasing employees in an existing business,
- c) All existing businesses that are changing or expanding their production or manufacturing process (e.g., a restaurant revising its menu or seating capacity, or a dentist office changing their silver recovery system),
- d) All cottage industry uses,
- e) All additions to existing commercial buildings or new commercial buildings (wet or dry) on parcels that have an existing sanitary sewer system (public or private) located within the parcel boundaries,
- f) All apartment/condominium complexes with common laundry, recreational, or office facilities.

## Do all applicants have to go through the same Pretreatment Review process?

No. Each type of user is sorted into one of three User Categories (Insignificant Industrial Users, Minor Industrial Users, and Significant Industrial Users), and will be processed accordingly.

### Significant Industrial Users:

- Examples: Boeing, James Hardie, Land Recovery Inc., etc.
- Less than 1% of commercial applicants
- 13-page application form, Floor Plan, Plumbing Plans, Site Plan, Engineering report,
- 15 business days for first review, 10 business days for subsequent reviews
- Minimum 30-day public comment period for new or revised Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permits.

### Minor Industrial Users:

- Examples: Restaurants, Automotive Repair, Schools, Hair Salons, etc.
- About 70% of commercial applicants
- 4-page application form, Floor Plan, Plumbing Plans, Site Plan
- 15 business days for first review, 10 business days for subsequent reviews

### Insignificant Industrial Users:

- Examples: Retail, Professional Services, Office, Shell Buildings, etc.
- About 30% of commercial applicants
- 3-page application form, Floor Plan
- Could possibly be issued over the counter if certain conditions are met.

Please see the ***Insignificant, Minor, and Significant Industrial User Pretreatment Review Applications*** for more information.

## When is a Pretreatment Review not required?

There are always exceptions to the rule. The following are some examples of commercial building permits that are not required to go through the Pretreatment Review process.

- a) Apartment buildings or multi-unit condominium buildings that only have dwelling units (no common laundry or recreation room, etc.)
- b) Landlord improvements to vacant tenant spaces prior to a tenant being identified. Once the new tenant is identified, however, a Pretreatment Review approval must be obtained prior to occupancy of the tenant space or issuance of building permits for further tenant improvements,
- c) An existing retail business (without on-site processing, servicing, or manufacturing) or a professional services (other than medical services) tenant who has already completed a Pretreatment Review for the tenant space that they are currently remodeling (inside the tenant space only) provided that there will be no increase in employees or changes in business practices,
- d) Home occupations.

### **Can I get a waiver from this requirement?**

Unfortunately not, but in many cases small businesses that can be designated as Insignificant Industrial Users will only have to submit an Insignificant Industrial User Pretreatment Review Application and will not have to go through any further review. Insignificant Industrial Users may even get their application fee waived if they are not proposing any plumbing work or sewer construction.

To determine what type of industrial user category your business fits into, please see the handout titled ***“What Type of Industrial User Are You?”***

### **How long will the Pretreatment Review take to be approved?**

Significant Industrial Users require an in-depth review of their processes and have a 30-day public comment period at a minimum.

Applications for Minor Industrial User require up to 15 business days for first review, 10 business days for subsequent reviews. If the Pretreatment review concludes that a pretreatment device is required, then the plan review time for those applications could be significantly longer.

Pretreatment review approvals for Insignificant Industrial Users are routinely issued over the counter, but if the project requires a change to the sewer system or a new connection that requires a Sewer Service Permit, then an engineering review may be required. However, if there is no proposed plumbing or sewer work, the application fee may even be waived.

Generally speaking, the number of reviews or resubmittals that are required before a Pretreatment Review can be approved depends on the completeness of the submittals. Partial submittals only slow down the process. Our review engineers and permit technicians are available to answer any questions that you may have to ensure that your applications are as complete as possible prior to submittal.

### **What other permits do I need?**

For sites within unincorporated Pierce County, the applicant must contact a Pierce County Permit Technician at the Pierce County Development Center regarding other permits required for the project.

For sites within a City (Tacoma, DuPont, Edgewood, Fife, Fircrest, Lakewood, Milton, Steilacoom, or University Place), the applicant must contact the appropriate city building department regarding other permits required for the project.

### **Where can I get the forms that I need?**

Sewer Utility Division Standard Plans and Forms can be downloaded in PDF format from the following webpage: [www.piercecountywa.org/sewer](http://www.piercecountywa.org/sewer)

Completed applications and fees (make checks out to Pierce County) must be delivered in person to:

Pierce County Sewer Utility – Permits  
2401 South 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 150  
Tacoma, WA 98409-7494

Or mailed to:

Pierce County Sewer Utility – Engineering  
9850 - 64<sup>th</sup> Street West  
University Place, WA 98467-1078

If you have any questions, please contact either:

A Sewer Utility Permit Technician at (253) 798-2737, or  
A Sewer Utility Engineer at (253) 798-4050