



BUILDING AND FIRE SAFETY SERVICES CLIENT ASSISTANCE MEMO

BASE PLANS

A **base plan** is a set of construction plans pre-approved as conforming to the building and energy codes in effect at the time of approval and intended for use on two or more sites.

The advantages of a base plan include:

- Construction requirements are known prior to submittal
- Once established, reduced plan review fees
- A faster plan review process

Note: Approved base plans remain valid until new relevant codes are adopted. Whenever revisions are made to Title 15 of the Gig Harbor Municipal Code, a new standard plan application and approval process will be required.

Limitations:

Base plans are generally limited to new construction of:

- Detached one- and two-family dwellings three stories or less.
- Multiple single-family dwellings (townhouses) three stories or less.
- Accessory structures such as detached garages and sheds.
- Other project types may be approved for base plans on a case-by-case basis.

Establishing a Base Plan:

A base plan may be established by three paths:

1. An applicant may apply to establish a base plan before having a specific site selected for use of the plan. The application will receive two complete reviews by the Building and Fire Safety Division.
2. An applicant may apply for a site-specific permit and to establish a base plan concurrently. The application will receive two complete reviews by the Building and Fire Safety Division.
3. An applicant may use a plan previously approved under the current code. The second application may include a site-specific construction component and will receive a second complete review.

*Written permission from the engineer and/or architect of record approving repetitive use of the design must accompany an application for a base plan when the applicant is other than the Base Plan Holder of Record.

Design Options:

An applicant may include design options within the context of the base plan. The scope and number of these options must be reasonable and could include plan reversals, alternate roof lines, bay window options, and variations in foundation wall heights or similar alternatives without significant structural changes. Each option must be submitted on separate sheets and must include any required structural changes and the supporting calculations, including the lateral and gravity load resistance system, stamped by the designer responsible for the engineering of the plans. Specific approval of options will be discussed with the reviewer and is somewhat dependent on the clarity with which options are presented on the plans.

Wind and Seismic Provisions:

Base plans are limited to those structures within the scope of the *International Residential Code*. When a structure is three stories or does not meet all the prescriptive wall bracing requirements of the *IRC*, then the lateral elements of the structure require an engineered design. However, the engineered design criteria may vary, depending on the site location, for wind exposure and seismic ground accelerations. The lateral design should address the most conservative assumptions for the Gig Harbor area, or the base plan may be limited to use in sites meeting the criteria.

Application Materials:

To establish a base plan, applicants should contact the Building and Fire Safety Division. A base plan application will be checked by two reviewers (*Only one additional review for previously approved plans*).

Base Plan without a Construction Component:

An applicant may establish a base plan without a specific site. Site specific information such as plot plans, geotechnical and drainage reports, and site topography at 5' increments, are required to be submitted along with the base plans and other complete permit application requirements at the time of individual permit application. *Establishment of a base plan does not constitute vesting for the purposes of code compliance*

Establishing a Base Plan with a Construction Component:

An applicant may establish a base plan and apply for a construction permit concurrently. When your application includes a construction component, in addition to the submittal requirements above, all site specific and construction permit related submittal requirements apply.

Subsequent Submittals:

Once a base plan is approved and on file with the Building and Fire Safety Division, each individual application for a permit will require submission of a new permit application identifying the base plan to be used and a site-specific site plan. All site specific and construction permit related submittal requirements apply. Any of the previously approved options used should be clearly identified on the plans, with unused options struck through.

The applicant who establishes the original base plan must either be the applicant for an individual construction permit using it or provide written permission to another construction permit applicant to utilize the base plan.

Base plan submittals will generally receive expedited screening, zoning, and structural plan review, but site problems, discretionary land use reviews, or zoning issues may delay processing.

Plan Changes:

- A. No applicant may make a change to an approved base plan, except the city may require changes in the plan if an error is detected.
- B. Any change to a base plan found during inspection will void the building permit issued for use of the base plan. If the permit is voided under this subsection, the holder of the permit shall re-apply for a new building permit, paying the building permit application fees for new construction. The applicant will be credited with 80 percent of the original permit fee. A new plan review fee as set forth in a resolution adopted by the council for this purpose shall be paid and the base plan review fee will not be refunded.
- C. A stop work order shall issue for any base plan project changed in accordance with subsection B of this section. Construction shall not be allowed to continue until after issuance of a new building permit for the project. (Ord. 1041 § 1, 2006).

Fees:

The fees for establishing a base plan include a filing fee of \$170.00 and a plan review fee equal to 150% of the plan review fee calculated in accordance with Resolution 1321. If the plans have previously been approved for construction in the City of Gig Harbor, the fees include the \$170.00 filing fee and 100% of the plan review fee calculated under Resolution 1321.

The plan review fees for subsequent permit applications associated with standard plans on file will be calculated at 25% of the plan review fee calculated under Resolution 1321. Where site constraints require a site-specific foundation design, or when a basement is added below a base plan structure, that design must be submitted with the base plans at the time of permit application.

Review of site specific foundations/basements will require an additional fee of \$85.00 per hour with a minimum charge of one hour.

All other fees, including permit fees in accordance with Resolution 1321 must be paid at the time of permit issuance.

Submitting your Base Plan:

All plans are to be submitted electronically – please see the [Electronic Plan Submittal](#) form for direction.