



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Installation of Pre-Manufactured Privacy Booths, Phone Booths, and Office Pods

Is a building permit required to install a pre-manufactured privacy booth, phone booth, or office pod?

Yes, according to the California Building Code (CBC), a building permit is required to install a booth or a pod. The over-the-counter building permit approval process can be used if the permit plans can be reviewed within one hour per review station.

Are plans required to obtain a building permit for installation of a privacy booth, phone booth, or office pod?

Yes, the CBC requires that all commercial tenant improvement renovations and alterations, including office pods, require plans.

What information needs to be included in the plans?

The type of plans required for a booth or pod building permit submittal include:

- Title page with a site plan, table of contents, and general project and building information.
- Floor plan indicating the location of the proposed booth or pods.
- Egress plan showing the accessible path of travel from booth or pods to the designated egress exit.
- Disabled access (DA) checklist.
- Disabled access details as required by CBC Chapter 11B.
- Elevations, sections, and installation details for the proposed booths or pods.
- Manufacturer's cut sheets and product details for pre-manufactured booths or pods.
- Identification of the type of existing structural floor assembly where the booths or pods will be installed.
- Structural details to anchor the booth or pod to the floor of the building.

The plans for the building permit need to meet minimum-size and other requirements, as listed on DBI's website: [sf.gov/step-by-step/get-otc-permit-your-commercial-project](https://www.sfgov.gov/step-by-step/get-otc-permit-your-commercial-project).

Are the plans required to be stamped and signed by a licensed architect or engineer?

Yes, according to the CBC, plans are required to be stamped and signed by a licensed architect or engineer. For more details, see DBI Information Sheet G-01: Signature on Plans.

Are privacy booths, phone booths, or office pods required to be accessible?

Yes, booth and pods are required to be accessible and meet disabled access building code requirements as specified in Chapter 11B of the CBC.



If only one single-user booth or pod or one multi-user booth or pod is provided, it must be fully accessible. If more than one single-user booth or pod is installed, at least one or 5% of the single-user booth or pods provided must be fully accessible.

In some cases, an existing fully accessible separate room or office, located adjacent to or near the proposed single-use booth or pod, may be designated as the equivalent of a fully accessible single-use booth or pod.

All multi-user booths or pods must be fully accessible.

Are fire sprinklers required when installing a privacy booth / phone booth / office pod?

If the building or space has an existing fire sprinkler system, the booth or pod must meet the following requirements based on San Francisco Fire Department Administrative Bulletin 2.04:

“Any phone/privacy booth/pod exceeding a 4-foot dimension in any direction shall be provided with a sprinkler protection within the booth/pod connected to the building sprinkler system.”

“Phone/Privacy booths/pods with dimensions of less than 4-feet in any direction shall be exempt from sprinkler protection inside the booth as long as they have minimum 4 feet clearance from any other adjacent booth/pod or any other similar obstruction, and as long as they are constructed of non-combustible materials (manufacturer’s cut sheets of the specific booth/pod must be provided for DBI and SFFD review and be placed/scanned onto the buildings permit plans).”

A separate fire-only permit will also be required to extend a fire sprinkler into a proposed booth or pod.

Please verify with San Francisco Fire Department plan review officials regarding fire sprinkler permitting requirements for your proposed booth or pod. For more information, visit sf.gov/get-fire-only-permit.

Are visual and/or audible alarms required to be installed in a privacy booth, phone booth or office pod?

In some cases, according to the San Francisco Fire Department Administrative Bulletin 2.01, “Private Rooms / Spaces” used as a “Phone Booth” or “Focused / Quiet Room” may be required to provide visual and audible alarms or signaling devices that are connected to the building’s fire alarm system.

Please verify with San Francisco Fire Department plan review officials if this requirement applies to your proposed booth or pods installation project.

What materials may be used to construct the pre-manufactured booth or pods?

The materials used to construct a pre-manufactured booth or pod must meet CBC, Chapter 8 - Interior Finishes code requirements including fire rating and flame spread requirements.



Is an electrical trade permit required to provide electrical power to the booth / pod?

Yes, an electrical trade permit is required if the booth or pod is wired directly to the building's electrical and communication system or if a new receptacle outlet is required to provide electrical power to the booth or pod.

A booth or pod can also plug directly to an existing approved electrical receptacle outlet.

Use of electrical extension cords to connect the booth or pod to the building electrical system is prohibited.

Do privacy booth or pods need to be anchored and secured to the floor or walls of the building?

Yes, according to the CBC, booth and pods are required to be anchored and secured to the building structure per ASCE7-16 Chapter 13: Seismic Design Requirements for Nonstructural Components, and as required by the manufacturer.

Code References:

California Building Code (Current Edition) Chapter 11B – Accessibility to Public Buildings, Public Accommodations, Commercial Buildings, and Public Housing

California Building Code (Current Edition) Chapter 8 – Interior Finishes

San Francisco Fire Code (Current Edition) – Administrative Bulletin 2.01 Fire Alarm and Signaling Submittals

San Francisco Fire Code (Current Edition) – Administrative Bulletin 2.04 Sprinkler Submittals

California Electrical Code (Current Edition)

ASCE7-16 Chapter 13 - Seismic Design Requirements for Nonstructural Components

Contact:

We are here to help. If you have general questions regarding the installation of pre-manufactured privacy booths, contact businesspermithelp@sfgov.org or 628-652-4949 to set up an appointment to discuss your application.

For technical questions, please contact the Technical Services Division by email at techq@sfgov.org or by phone at 628-652-3720.