

## Upgrade Category for Demising Walls in Tenant Improvements

The following is intended to provide building permit upgrade guidance, resulting from demising wall work, as required by Part 11 of the Vancouver Building By-law.

A demising wall is typically a non-loadbearing partition that separates adjoining tenants from one another and is constructed as a fire-separation with an assigned time-based, endurance rating, unless otherwise exempted within the By-law.

Relocating or adding demising walls are common project scopes that are either landlord-based or part of the tenant-related improvement work. The work relating to demising walls has not been included under any particular Category of Work within the Existing Building Upgrade Mechanism under Division B, Appendix A-11.2.1.2. of the 2014 Vancouver Building By-Law.

The 2019 Vancouver Building By-law now provides guidance when demising walls are categorized as a Minor Renovation and has amended text under Division B, Notes to Part 11, A-11.2.1.2. reading:

*MINOR RENOVATION - Minor renovation means a project whose scope of work includes construction limited to the improvement, renovation, reconfiguration, or refurbishment of a single suite contained within a single tenant space and those demising walls shared with the adjoining suites, but does not include the public or common floor areas of the building.*

*Minor renovations may include the following:*

- Reconfiguration of the interior space of the suite which may occupy multiple levels in a building,*
- Retention of existing interconnected floor spaces that do not create new connections to previously unconnected floor areas,*
- Retention of existing mezzanines that do not add floor area,*
- Renovation in adjacent suites to the extent necessary to support the relocation of shared demising walls, and*
- Exterior renovations pertaining to the subject suite.*

*Where the renovation includes a new interconnected floor space, this work would not be considered to be a minor renovation. New mezzanines are considered to be additions.*

Below are two broad scenarios outlining when demising walls are constructed, along with the corresponding upgrading requirement associated with each case:

### 1. Relocated/Removed Demising Wall:

This scenario is applicable where two or more existing suites are separated by a demising wall and the proposed work involves relocation or removal of the demising wall such that the

number of units is less than or equal to what existed. In this case the applicable Category of Work is a Minor Renovation.

Examples:

- Removal of an existing demising wall to create a larger tenant space
- A permit for the relocation/re-demising of existing tenant space(s)
- Demising wall work is included with the tenant improvement (TI) permit
- Related tenant improvement (TI) permit that is a result of the demising wall work permitted under this Category of Work

Despite the minor renovation upgrading level (F1,S2,N1,A2,E2), all new work shall conform to the current Building By-law requirements and any created non-conformance shall be corrected (eg: number of exits, distance between egress, direction of door swing, mezzanine area limits, travel distance, etc.) and does not include other Categories of Work.

## 2. Newly Created Demising Wall:

This scenario is applicable where one or more suites are newly created through the construction of a demising wall(s) such that there is an increase in the number of units than had previously existed. In this case the applicable Category of Work is a Major Renovation.

Example:

- New tenant spaces are created by constructing new demising wall(s).
- The related tenant improvement (TI) permit will follow the major renovation design upgrade levels relating to this space

Despite the major renovation upgrade levels (F2,S2,N3,A3,E4), all new work shall conform to the current Building By-law requirements and any created non-conformance shall be corrected. A major renovation involves upgrading areas outside the tenant spaces such as within the public areas (F2), entire building exits (N3) and public areas (A3) and shall be coordinated with the building owners.

Building owners that complete the required building upgrade that is consistent with the Major Renovation category of work will allow future tenant improvement projects to be proceed with only the tenant space needing to meet the current Building Bylaw requirements, provided it does not include other Categories of Work and meets the requirements of Sentence 11.2.1.2.(3).

### NOTE:

As permitted by Sentence 11.2.1.2.(3), buildings constructed or fully upgraded under a building permit design and issued under Building By-law 8057 (effective November 1, 1999) do not require further upgrading.

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