

## Commercial Buildings Plan Review

### Recommended Changes to Help Balance DSPS Workload / Staff Resources

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Currently, the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services is challenged with a commercial building plan review workload that appears to exceed the capacity of plan review staff. The wait for DSPS plan review availability has often exceeded 10 weeks during 2019.

To address this workload/resource imbalance the Alliance for Regulatory Coordination recommends reinstating certain exemptions from commercial building plan review, that were in the Wisconsin Commercial Building Code promulgated as Clearinghouse Rule 00-179, which went into effect on July 1, 2002.

In that code edition, plans for certain projects were exempt from state level plan review if the projects were designed by a registered individual under Chapter 443, Wisconsin Statutes (architects, engineers and designers); and the project was supervised by a Wisconsin registered architect, engineer or designer in accordance with section Comm 61.50, Wisconsin Administrative Rules.

That exemption was removed from the Wisconsin Commercial Building Code via Clearinghouse Rule 10-103, which went into effect on September 1, 2011.

The plan review exemptions that existed from July 1, 2002 to September 1, 2011, were built around the provisions of section 443.15, Wisconsin Statutes, which allows buildings of less than 50,000 cubic feet of volume to be designed, and construction supervised, by persons, firms, or corporations not registered under Chapter 443, Wisconsin Statutes.

Essentially, under Clearinghouse Rule 00-179, if the owner voluntarily had certain construction projects of under 50,000 cubic feet of volume, designed and supervised by a Wisconsin registered architect, engineer, or designer, state level plan review was not required. Following is a reprint of Table 61.30-2, from the July 1, 2002 Wisconsin Commercial Building Code.

#### Buildings Exempt from Plan Review

Bldg. Type/Occupancy	Building Description
Assembly Group A-2	Containing 25,000 to less than 50,000 cubic feet in volume
Business Group B	
Factory Group F	
Mercantile Group M	
Storage Group S	
Utility & Misc. Group U	Containing less than 25,000 cubic feet in volume
Assembly Groups A-1, A-3, A-4, A-5	
Educational Group E	
High Hazard Group H	
Residential Group R	

Note: The exemption for not having to submit and obtain prior approval from the department did not prohibit a municipality from requiring plan submission, review and approval by the municipality; nor did it supersede the need for obtaining local building permits prior to start of the project.

*The Alliance for Regulatory Coordination is a consortium of 19 organizations involved in building design, construction and regulatory services. Alliance membership consists of business, labor, advocacy, professional and governmental groups; numbering thousands of members, all committed to promoting more coordinated and efficient regulatory services for citizens and businesses of Wisconsin. Learn more about the Alliance at [www.4ARC.org](http://www.4ARC.org).*