



# County of San Diego

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY

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## AB 671 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Overview

On October 9, 2025, Assembly Bill 671 (Wicks) was enacted and becomes effective on January 1, 2026. This new law aims to speed up restaurant tenant improvement projects and streamline the plan approval process by amending the Government Code, Business & Professions code and the California Retail Food Code (CRFC). This document will focus only on the changes to the CRFC, which includes a new mandated resubmittal review turnaround time for complete plan submissions for restaurants.

### Statutory Reference

AB 671 amends Section 114380 of the Health and Safety Code by adding subsection (f). The new provisions establish specific timelines for restaurant tenant improvement plan reviews.

### Scope of Application

Applies only to **restaurant tenant improvement** plans. Does not apply to other food facilities such as convenience stores, commissaries, or mobile food facilities or to the construction of a new building.

### 1. When will the law take effect?

January 1, 2026

### 2. Does AB 671 remove any environmental health department oversight in the food facility permitting process?

No. AB 671 does not remove the environmental health department's oversight. Local environmental health departments may continue to conduct inspections and plan reviews as necessary to ensure compliance with applicable health and safety codes.

### **3. What is the definition of a restaurant?**

For the purposes of this legislative change, a restaurant is defined in Section 1474 of the Labor Code as a retail food establishment that prepares, serves, and vends food directly to the consumer and is not a fast-food restaurant.

### **4. What is the definition of tenant improvement?**

Tenant improvement refers to a modification to the interior of an existing building.

### **5. Have there been any changes to the initial plan review turnaround time?**

No. Initial plan reviews should still be completed within 20 business days.

### **6. What is the definition of a “complete plan”?**

The bill does not define a complete plan, and its interpretation is left to each jurisdiction. However, a reasonable complete plan typically includes:

- A completed application for plan submittal
- A menu equivalent to what will be shared with the public
- Successful submission and processing of payment for plan review
- A full set of plans, including but not limited to:
  - Title Sheet
  - Floor Plan
  - Equipment Plan and Schedule
  - Mechanical Plan and Schedule
  - Plumbing Plan and Schedule
  - Finish Plan and Schedule
- Specification sheets
- Physical finish samples
- Standard Operating Procedures (if applicable)

**Note:** For remodel projects, only the applicable items must be submitted.

## **7. What does the new law say about resubmittal review turnaround time?**

Resubmittals should be reviewed within 10 business days. However, unlike initial plan reviews, the bill does not specify that plans will be automatically deemed approved if not reviewed within that timeframe.

## **8. Would all resubmittals need to be reviewed within the mandated 10 business days?**

Yes, plan resubmittals, which are plans submitted with only changes directly linked to comments or corrections issued by the health department, should be reviewed within 10 business days.

## **9. What's the difference between "resubmittals" and "change of scope"?**

**Resubmittals** address only the items identified by the environmental health department as needed corrections. Resubmittals should be reviewed within 10 business days.

**Change of Scope** includes plans submitted with changes outside the scope of the issued correction letter or with a change to the scope of work or operations that go beyond correcting identified deficiencies. Change of Scope revisions will be reviewed within 20 business days.

### **Examples of Resubmittals:**

- Relocating or resizing a sink, floor sink, or floor drain per correction comments
- Changing finish materials that were previously disapproved
- Adding missing compliance details (e.g., cove base, backsplash height, floor slope)
- Providing missing equipment data sheets or sanitation listings
- Correcting labeling errors on plan sheets
- Adjusting lighting or ventilation details as requested
- Revising plumbing or electrical layouts solely to address cited violations

### **Examples of Change of Scope:**

- Adding new rooms, bars, or food prep areas not previously shown
- Changing type or location of major equipment (e.g., new hood, walk-in cooler)
- Expanding plumbing or electrical systems beyond prior corrections
- Modifying construction scope (e.g., converting dry storage to food prep)

- Introducing operational changes that affect classification (e.g., pre-packaged to open food handling)
- Adding equipment requiring referral to other agencies (CDFA, FDA, USDA)
- Submitting partial plans that conflict with prior submittals
- Changing contractor notes, installation methods, or ceiling/floor systems not previously reviewed

**10. What is the process if revised plans include new information not previously reviewed?**

If revised plans include new information not previously reviewed, the plans will be considered a **change of scope**. The applicant will be notified as soon as feasible that the revised plans may require **up to 20 business days** for review as they are not a resubmittal that is subject to the 10 business day review timeline. New comments or corrections may be issued based on the newly submitted information.

**Restaurant Tenant Improvement Plan Review Timeline**

Type of Submittal	Requirement	Review Timeframe	Notes
<b>Initial Review</b>	EH must approve or deny a complete tenant improvement plan.	Within 20 business days	Plans are deemed approved if no action is taken within 20 business days on a complete submittal.
<b>Resubmittal</b> (plans addressing only changes directly linked to comments or corrections issued by EH)	EH's review must be limited to previously identified deficiencies.	Within 10 business days	Code does not explicitly state that deemed approval applies to resubmittals. Open to interpretation.
<b>Change of Scope</b> (plans include changes or new information outside of the scope of the correction letter)	EH's review will include new information. Not considered a "resubmittal".	Within 20 business days	Plans are deemed approved if no action is taken within 20 business days on a complete submittal.