



Commercial Landlord and Tenant Guide: Frequently Asked Questions About Commercial Space



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Preface

The purpose of this guide is to aid our customers in understanding what may be required of them when starting up a business in a newly leased space. It is organized into sections of several general topics that landlords and tenants most commonly express interest in, along with the most frequently asked questions regarding these topics. Its intent is not to be a designer's manual that delves into the intricacies of the code requirements, but rather to explain the basic minimum requirements of the currently adopted building codes for small and medium commercial lease spaces, and to provide a basic explanation of how they may affect the build-out or remodel of a commercial tenant space.

About the Building Codes

The building codes are a minimum "best practices" approach to insuring that when the public enters your business, their safety, health, usability, accessibility and comfort are reasonably assured. The codes are the very minimum standards for laying out a floor plan and constructing a project.

Federal, state and local governments have deemed the development and organization of these best practices so important, that they adopt them into their laws, to insure that there is consistency in understanding and enforcement. Local building, planning and fire departments are the agencies empowered to implement these laws.

General

Q. Can I get a copy of the local building codes?

A. Albuquerque's currently adopted codes can be found on the first page of our Uniform Administrative Code, which is available online at cabq.gov (navigate to Planning Department and find Building Safety Codes under the "Most Popular Pages" column). The Albuquerque amendments and the New Mexico Amendments may be printed from the links provided. The National and International Code links will guide you to websites where those code books may be purchased or may be offered as free publications.

Q. Where can I get a copy of the local amending ordinances for these codes?

A. Copies of these ordinances may be obtained online at

<http://www.cabq.gov/planning/documents/UniformAdministrativeCode2012.pdf>

Uniform Plumbing Code:

<http://ia700405.us.archive.org/24/items/gov.law.iapmo.upc.2009/iapmo.upc.2009.pdf>

National Electric Code:

<http://archive.org/download/gov.law.nfpa.nec.2011/nfpa.nec.2011.pdf>

Uniform Mechanical Code:

<http://archive.org/download/gov.law.iapmo.umc.2009/iapmo.umc.2009.pdf>

Q. What are the currently adopted building codes to which my space must conform?

A. Within city limits, the following building codes must be followed:

- New Mexico Boiler Code
- 2009 New Mexico Commercial Building Code
- 2009 New Mexico Earthen Building Materials Code
- 2011 New Mexico Electrical Code
- 2009 State of New Mexico Energy Conservation Code
- 2009 New Mexico Existing Building Code
- 2009 New Mexico Historic Earthen Buildings Code
- 2009 New Mexico Mechanical Code
- 2009 New Mexico Non-Load Bearing Baled Straw Construction Building Standards
- 2009 New Mexico Plumbing Code
- 2009 New Mexico Residential Building Code

Q. If I have questions regarding the building code requirements, who can I contact to get the correct answers?

A. You may contact the Plan Review desk with questions at 505-924-3963. All plan reviewers are knowledgeable in the codes. You may also ask a building inspector, a licensed architect or a general contractor to get answers to most of your questions.

Q. Where can I find design criteria for Albuquerque?

A. The design criteria such as design wind speed, snow load, frost depth, etc. are listed in the Albuquerque Uniform Administrative Code which is available online at [cabq.gov](http://www.cabq.gov).

<http://www.cabq.gov/planning/planning-regulations-and-policies/building-codes>

Planning

Q. I will be moving into an older existing building that has been in commercial use for 40 years. Will I be required to bring the building up to all current codes?

A. The answer depends on what you will be using the building for, whether it is already heated and cooled and what materials were used to construct the building. In most cases the International Existing Building Code only requires those portions of the building or space that are being added to, altered or changed to meet the current code requirements, but, if you are changing the use or occupancy of the building or space, a permit is required. Consult your New Mexico design professional about additional fire protection and accessibility requirements that may be triggered by alteration levels as described in the existing building code. Please note that the use and occupancy of a building in this context is defined by the Building Codes and does not often coincide with common notions of use and occupancy. Therefore, you should contact your local building department and/or your New Mexico design professional to determine the proposed use and occupancy.

Q. If I am taking an old warehouse and I'm going to completely remodel the interior and part of the exterior to turn it into a bar/restaurant, what will I have to do to bring it up to code?

A. The building in its current configuration would be considered a building shell. A building shell is the main structural elements of a building consisting of basically 4 exterior walls, floors and roof along with basic building service equipment, wiring and plumbing which typically is not ready to be occupied. You will need to contact a licensed NM design professional to prepare construction drawings for the permit application for the proposed space.

Q. Why do I have to have plans drawn for my project?

A. State law requires that, plans be "approved" by the local building department, and the approved plans are the legal recorded document for the project. The plans must demonstrate all the work that is to be done, all the materials to be used and the final permanent layout and use of all spaces within the project. The plans must demonstrate that the space that is to be improved is safe for the general public and employees to occupy and use by complying with all applicable requirements of the building codes.

Q. Once I pass final inspections and move in, can I make changes to the space without getting another permit?

A. Again, the plans are the legal document for how the space was approved for safety and usability. Changes to the movable display shelving, movable counters, desks and cubicles may be done without permits so long as exit aisles and wheelchair accessibility is still maintained, but, if you are wishing to move permanently affixed walls, electrical wiring, lighting, or plumbing fixtures, new plans and permits would be required. See the City of Albuquerque Uniform Administrative Code for building permit exemptions.

Note: Non-fixed and movable cases, counters, and partitions, including fences of any height, permanently or temporarily installed in an A-2 occupancy shall be approved by the Albuquerque Fire Department.

Q. Can I draw my own plans and/or perform my own construction work in my new space?

A. No. Because of the experience and expertise necessary in preparing code compliant plans, state and local laws allow only state licensed design professionals (i.e., licensed architects or engineers) to prepare commercial building plans, and only state licensed contractors and subcontractors may perform work on a commercial site.

Q. Who has to do the construction work for my project?

A. All commercial construction work on the project must be performed by state and local licensed, insured and bonded general contractors and their licensed sub-contractors.

Q. Am I allowed to do any work at all on my project?

A. You are encouraged to actively participate in the design of your space with one of the licensed professionals listed above. Only licensed general contractors and their licensed sub-contractors can do permanent construction work on a commercial space.

Under direction of the general contractor, you as the tenant, subject to the terms of your lease, may move in furniture, do light decorative or cosmetic work, such as wall papering, decorating or painting, and may hang pictures, shades, etc. You may set up movable fixtures, set up portable displays, tables and chairs and display cases.

Q. Why do I have to have inspections for my project?

A. Federal and local laws require the construction to be done according to the local building department's "approved" building plans. Inspectors are knowledgeable code professionals who are nationally and state certified and are experts in construction techniques and construction industry best practices. They must visit the site as work progresses to insure that the project is being constructed in a code compliant manner per the approved building plans. Inspections ensure basic building code compliance and provide a minimum "best practices" approach to public safety, health, usability, accessibility and comfort.

Q. If I don't like how something is turning out; may I make changes to my space as it is being constructed?

A. If you wish to make changes to the project after the plans have been "approved", the design professional must make revisions to the plans and re-submit them to the building department for review and approval. No changes can be performed in the field until the plan change is re-approved by the Planning Department's plans reviewer. Some changes are necessary, but be aware that frequent changes can be very costly and time consuming, and may slow the progress of your project and delay your opening.

Q. If I want to move into a space that doesn't require any work at all to meet my business needs, do I need a new Certificate of Occupancy in order to acquire my business license?

A. Certificates of Occupancy are issued to the building or space, not to the business. Therefore, if the space you wish to occupy has been previously approved for the same type of business that you wish to have in the space, a new Certificate of Occupancy is not required.

Q. If the new space I wish to occupy has not been previously approved for the type of use that I need, how can I get a new Certificate of Occupancy issued?

A. In order to change the use of a building or space, a change of occupancy permit and inspections are required. Your New Mexico Design Professional (architect or engineer) will evaluate the space for the new use and you, the design professional or the contractor may submit the documentation for a permit. Once the permit is approved and issued to your New Mexico General Contractor, the building or space will be inspected and approved for a new Certificate of Occupancy.

Q. I am in a hurry to occupy my space and get started in business. Can my contractor start work before the building permit is issued?

A. No work may be performed until the building permit is issued. If it is discovered that work was being performed prior to obtaining a permit, a stop work order will be issued and the contractor will be charged double permit fees. Beginning construction prior to obtaining a permit could substantially delay the project. If you suggested that the contractor start this work without a permit, he may pass this expense on to you.

Q. Is there a way to expedite the permit process?

A. Yes, the city Planning Department offers FasTrax, which is an optional fee-based service. Each submittal has an assigned plan expeditor. Overall, FasTrax is faster, easier, and simpler.

In addition to FasTrax, the Planning Department also offers other options with expedited turnaround times:

1. E-Plan (or Electronic Plan Review) allows the applicant to upload the plans electronically and makes it easy for plan reviewers to work together with

- the applicant during the review process. It provides the applicant with the convenience of self-service access when inquiring about the review status or checking for updates. All project information is kept in one location, and each review department can interact with it anytime, from anywhere so long as they have Internet access. Information concerning ePlan may be found at the cabq.gov website: <http://www.cabq.gov/planning/our-department/building-safety>
2. Green Path is an optional fee-based program. All submittals have an assigned plan expeditor, are given priority status, and must substantially exceed energy conservation code minimums.

Life Safety

The main purpose for all fire-life safety code requirements is to enable the occupants to escape the building as quickly, orderly and safely as possible in the event of a life-threatening incident. Therefore, these provisions of the code are most vital. They are based on the use of the space, the degree of combustibility of material used to build the structure and the number of occupants that will be present during full operation. Obviously, some uses create denser occupant loads or are more dangerous than others. For example, a business office is less dangerous than a fireworks factory. An insurance office will generate less occupant loading than a night club with drinking and dancing. Therefore the code has stricter requirements for night clubs than insurance offices. There are set formulas for calculating the design occupant loading of a space based on its intended uses and amount of square footage. These formulas are based on studies for these types of uses over an extended period of time. Other factors that determine the safety of occupants are the materials used in the construction of the building and if fire alarms or sprinklers were installed. The building code official has the ultimate responsibility to the general public in determining the design occupant loading of a space and his determination is final.

Q. I am intending to open a karate studio that will only have 15 students at a time. Once every 6 weeks or so, we will have testing for belt awards, where parents and relatives are invited. Can I base my occupant load on the instructor and 15 students?

A. No. The life safety code requires the calculation to be based on the maximum occupants that will be present in the space, calculated by the use, square footage, and space configuration. Consequently, the Planning Department will have to look at the total number of occupants the space is calculated to accommodate, not an actual count of persons in the space at any one time.

Q. I am looking at a long, narrow space for my business office. At present, it only has the front door for an entrance-exit. Based on my occupant load, I should only need one exit. Isn't this correct?

A. Not necessarily. The intent of the code is to exit all occupants out as quickly as possible in the unfortunate event of a catastrophe. Therefore, the distance an occupant might have to travel to reach an exit, called the exit access travel distance or the common path of egress travel, may become a concern. If occupants have to travel too far to have a safe exit, a second exit may be required.

Q. I am considering locating my congregation in a storefront retail center until we can raise enough money to build our church building. Besides the number of exits, is there anything else I should know?

A. Yes. When higher risk assembly type uses are placed in a strip shopping center with other tenant types of uses, fire barrier walls may be required between the assembly uses and the surrounding neighbors, to protect the uses from one another and to allow the more numerous occupants of the assembly spaces more time to exit the building in case of an emergency.

Q. Sprinkler systems are very expensive. Would I ever be required to put in a sprinkler system if the space does not currently have a sprinkler fire protection system?

A. Yes, possibly. Depending on the use of the space and the number of occupants, a sprinkler system may be required. For example, if you are looking at putting in a bar and restaurant in a non-sprinklered building and the design occupant load exceeds 99 persons, a full sprinkler system will be required.

If you are looking to lease an office-warehouse space to start a church and the design occupant load is greater than 299 persons, the building will have to be sprinklered. Please note this is the code design occupant load and not the number of parishioners in a church, the normal amount of bar patrons in the lounge or customers able to access a tanning table in a tanning salon, etc. The design occupant load and the number of participants your business plan is anticipating may be two completely different numbers and the design load will prevail.

Q. I am interested in an existing two story space to develop a business office. It has an open stairway to the second floor and two exit doors on the first floor. I will only have about 25 persons for a total occupant load. Would I need to do any more work to the space?

A. Yes, generally two exits are required from the second floor, depending on the design occupant loading of the second floor and the travel distance from the farthest point on the second floor to the first floor exit doors. Depending on if the building is sprinklered, these stairways may be required to be constructed as fire-rated exit enclosures (separated from the rest of the space) and lead directly to the exterior of the building.

Q. I found a shell space that is perfect for my proposed retail area in front, with a large stock room in back. It has two doors: the main entrance door in front and a door going out the back. Is that enough exit doors for my space?

A. Probably not. The code requires that all aisles that access required exit doors remain clear and open at all times. For that reason, an exit path must be protected to all exits. The code specifically states that required exit doors may not be accessed through kitchens, bathrooms, storage rooms, stock rooms or similar spaces. Because storage spaces are likely to have boxes or merchandise handling equipment blocking exit paths, the exits must be placed such that the occupants do not have to travel through the store rooms to reach the rear door. Usually an exit corridor is required to be built from the back of the retail store area through the stock room to the rear second required exit doorway in order to protect the path. (also see ACCESSIBILITY below).

Restroom and Plumbing Fixtures

Restroom fixtures are a health and comfort issue for the public, and are therefore mandated by the code. Because of the cost of putting in an additional restroom, this is probably the number one "deal breaker" in negotiating a lease for a new space. Unless you are proposing retail occupancy, separate male and female restrooms are required for each space with a design occupant load of 15 or more occupants. This includes all occupants, both employees and customers. A retail store requires separate male and female restrooms if there is a combination of 50 or more employees and customers (occupant load greater than 49). These are the same design occupant loads used to calculate code exiting requirements by considering use and area based on the code's mathematical probability formula. Be aware that the number of restrooms and fixtures increases depending on additional occupant loads per the formulas in the building code tables.

Q. I found a space in a strip shopping center to establish my church. It presently has two restrooms. Shouldn't that be enough for my congregation?

A. It depends on the total design occupant load of the space. The calculation tables in Chapter 29 of the building code require an additional restroom fixture for each 75 men and 75 women. The table requires any fraction of a fixture to be rounded up to the next whole fixture. Therefore, if you had a design occupant load of 200 persons, the code states that 100 of them would be men and 100 women. $100 / 75$ occupants per fixture would equal 1.25 toilet fixtures. Therefore, each sex would require two toilets.

Q. Do all restrooms have to meet ADA accessibility requirements?

A. All new restrooms must meet full ADA requirements. If a restroom is existing, and no new work is being done within the restroom, then it normally is not required to be brought up to federal accessibility standards.

Q. I am planning a suite of offices for my consulting business. I want to have a private restroom, directly off of my office that only I will use. It can only be accessed from inside my personal office. Do I have to meet ADA requirements for this restroom?

A. Though you do not have to install the accessible fixtures themselves at the time of your remodel, you will still have to meet the accessible clear floor spaces required, as if the fixtures were installed. You, therefore, do not have to install the 19" high toilet, but you must have a 60" wheel chair turning radius within the restroom and at least 60" of clear floor space measured from the wall where the grab bar would be installed later, out to the nearest edge of the sink or vanity. You do not have to install the grab bars, but the blocking for the installation of the grab bars must be installed in the wall, for quick installation later. If you want a shower stall in this restroom, the shower stall itself does not need to be the accessible type, but the clear floor wheel chair space in front of the stall must be provided now.

Q. Do I need to install a drinking fountain in my tenant space?

A. The code requires at least one drinking fountain in the space. Keep in mind that when a drinking fountain is to be provided, it must be a dual drinking fountain that provides access not only to able bodied persons, but disabled persons as well. This is a dual fountain with high and low fixtures meeting ADA requirements. If your tenant space is in a building with multiple tenants and common drinking fountains are provided in the public access area, then this would suffice.

Q. Our alteration space has a break room with a kitchenette and a sink for employees. Would this suffice for a drinking fountain since employees can access it to obtain drinking water?

A. No. The minimum required plumbing fixture table in Chapter 29 of the International Building Code requires that most occupancy groups have at least one drinking fountain. The ANSI accessibility standard specifies spout outlet heights for wheelchair accessible drinking fountains and also spout outlet heights for standing persons. Therefore, the installation of either two drinking fountains or a dual drinking fountain meeting both the IBC and ANSI standards is required.

Q. Do I need a janitor's mop sink for my tenant space?

A. Normally, a mop sink is required. If a common area janitor's closet and mop sink are provided by the center's owner for all tenants at all times for their common use, then this would suffice to meet the requirements.

Accessibility

Federal Americans with Disabilities Act requires all public buildings, fixtures and facilities meet accessibility standards for the disabled.

Q. I am planning to open a lounge/tavern business in a strip center. I will have two separate bars that customers can sit at and watch the game or play video poker. Can I provide an accessible space at just one of the bars to accommodate a disabled patron at that space?

A. No. If an able bodied person is provided with an amenity at each location, then the same amenity must be provided for a disabled person at each location.

Q. I am leasing a small 2 story building for my investment financial services company. I will only have 2 offices on an 1100 sq. ft. second floor. Do I have to install an elevator to provide accessibility to a disabled person?

A. The law does allow an exception for second floor spaces of less than 3000 sq. ft., if the same attention can be given to the disabled person on the first floor. Therefore, though desirable, the elevator would not be required.

Q. I want to install a restroom on the second floor of the space mentioned in the previous question. Does it have to meet accessibility requirements?

A. No. If the second floor is not required to be accessible, then the restroom on the second floor does not have to meet accessible requirements, BUT, the occupant load of the first floor will then govern the amount of restrooms required on the first floor and all restrooms on the first floor must be accessible.

Q. I am putting in a coffee bar/cyber cafe adjacent to a pedestrian mall. I will install a service/order window directly out onto the mall for pedestrian sales. I will also have an interior coffee bar and tables for customers in the interior of the space. Do I have to meet accessibility requirements at the service window if a disabled person can order and purchase their coffee from a server at an interior table or bar?

A. Yes. Each point of sale or service that is provided for an able bodied person must also be provided for the disabled. Therefore, the service window, the interior bar and at least 5% of the tables, starting with the 1st one, must be made accessible.

Energy Code

The applicable provisions of this code must be met whenever there is an alteration to the walls, windows, doors and roofs separating heated/cooled space from unheated/uncooled space or outside air. This combined group of exterior building components is also known in code terms as the building thermal envelope. For new buildings or complete additions to existing buildings, the new building or spaces must meet all applicable requirements. For existing buildings, only the building components being altered must be upgraded to meet the current energy code requirements.

The DOE has provided a free online calculator called COM-check to aid in meeting the design requirements of this code. It may be accessed by visiting www.energycodes.gov.

Q. We have recently rented two existing side-by-side commercial suites that were previously used as heated and cooled retail spaces. We plan on converting these spaces to a bar and restaurant. Do we have to add to the existing insulation in the attic and tear off the exterior wall drywall to add thicker insulation to meet the current code, just because we are changing occupancy types?

A. Not necessarily. Though initiating any energy upgrades will most likely have a very quick payback regarding your operating expenses, only the exterior building components that you are changing or altering must comply with the latest code requirements. All other components that you are not touching may remain unchanged.

Q. We have found an older building that is part existing office space and the large remainder is unconditioned warehouse space. We want to add additional office area in part of the old warehouse and heat the rest of the warehouse. What would be required comply with the energy code?

A. Whenever you are adding or changing existing unconditioned space to conditioned space, all building components surrounding the new heated area must meet the minimum current energy code requirements just as if it were a new building.

Q. In the above example, if we were to build the conditioned offices inside the existing warehouse and leave the rest of the warehouse unconditioned, what must we do to comply?

A. All of the new building components separating the heated office from the unheated warehouse space shall comply with the code as if they were being added to the outside of the building. The existing warehouse could remain unchanged.

Q. What would be the best way to meet compliance with the above examples?

A. There are two methods for meeting compliance: The prescriptive method, where you must meet predetermined values for the various energy conservation requirements for all applicable components surrounding the newly conditioned space. The second approach is the whole building weighted average method, which considers the building energy consumption as a whole, allowing trade-offs for efficiency values.

Q. We want to expand or remodel our retail space into the back warehouse. We are also going to widen our front main entry door into the retail floor. What should we be concerned with?

A. Besides meeting the exterior building component requirements for the new walls and ceiling separating the new conditioned sales floor from the remaining unconditioned warehouse space (using the prescriptive method), you will most likely be required to install a vestibule at the renovated main front door. If the main front door of your space opens into a space that inter-links with another space which together, have a combined area of over 3000 contiguous square feet (without doors or walls separating the connected spaces) then a vestibule will be required.

Q. We currently have an auto repair garage business. In order to provide for more comfort for our mechanics, we want to install several swamp coolers on the roof for summer cooling, and a gas fired forced air unit in the corner of the garage for winter heating. The garage bay doors are opened and closed frequently. Would we have to do other upgrades to the building in order to install the above?

A. The energy code exempts spaces that require 1.0 watt/sq. ft. or less or 3.4 Btu/hr. X sq. ft. to heat or cool the space, regardless of use. In each of these cases, the energy required to accomplish what you are intending will most probably exceed these limits. Therefore, the garage space must meet all the applicable requirements as for a new conditioned space, such as but not limited to additional insulation, high efficacy light fixtures, efficient glazing, etc.

Q. Can we use portable propane fired heaters for the patio?

A. Yes, the code does not govern portable space heaters.

Q. We will be leasing a large office area in an older existing office building. We will be moving some cubicles around and relocating the lighting over these spaces. Do we need to comply with the interior lighting efficiencies section of the energy code for this work?

A. No, if all you are doing is moving the lighting around. If you add any additional lighting to the existing lights, then the entire space would need to comply with a lighting budget calculation. If your project entails moving existing lighting into new enclosed offices, the switching requirements for light reduction controls must be met.

Q. We are remodeling an existing space to start up a restaurant. Since the health department always requires more lighting in the kitchen to meet health standards, are we exempt from the interior lighting power requirements of the energy code for these types of areas?

A. No. However, the energy code provides a generous allowance for lighting in restaurants, based on the entire area of the space. This over-all power allowance takes into account the increased amount of lighting that will be required in the kitchen/food prep areas. Therefore, you should be able to meet the requirements of

the energy code by correctly allocating the proper amount of lighting wattage where it is most needed.

Plumbing and Mechanical

In general, when renting a new commercial space, the mechanical and plumbing systems in some cases are already installed, though not on new buildings considered a shell. On occasion, a new or additional water heater may need to be installed or ducts will have to be rearranged or extended, depending on the new layout of the space. Of course there are several occupancy types that require extensive new plumbing and mechanical systems. Beauty and barber shops, dog grooming shops, day spas, medical and vet clinics, health and fitness centers, bars, restaurants and lounges and cafes *may* all require additional plumbing and mechanical equipment, regardless of what was in the space before.

Air quality is a serious health and safety concern not only for the public, but also the employees that are exposed to dangerous levels of fumes that some people can have severe reactions to. Therefore, the mechanical aspects of hair, nail and beauty salons, as well as barber shops and dog grooming establishments, etc., *may* require additional mechanical equipment that provide high rates of exhaust and temperature recovery with the same volume of outside air to replace the air being exhausted.

Q. I am leasing a space for a yogurt shop in a strip retail center. Since I will not be cooking any food items that will create grease, aren't we exempt from installing a grease interceptor?

A. No. Per the Water Authority, all establishments that will serve coffee, ice cream, and food items are required to have a grease interceptor (a minimum of 50 pounds is required in the city). Also, the City Environmental Health department requires that all restaurants and establishments have a three-compartment sink for washing, sanitizing, and rinsing and that it be connected to a grease interceptor (a minimum of 50 pounds).

Q. We want to rent a space to install a coffee bar. There is no room outside of the building to install a grease interceptor. What will we have to do?

A. The City of Albuquerque will allow an above-ground grease interceptor to be installed if structural conditions or other obstacles prevent the traditional in-ground installation. However, it must be approved by the Building Mechanical Supervisor from the Planning Department, and installations are limited to coffee shops, ice cream shops, and mom-and-pop delis that only make sandwiches.

Q. We are installing a burger bar in a strip shopping center. What type of special mechanical equipment will be required?

A. Any food preparation establishment that has a commercial stove, griddle, grill or fryer that creates grease or oil vapors, will require a fan driven fire suppression type I exhaust hood installed directly over the equipment and an exhaust grease duct housed in a fire proof shaft liner. In addition, an air intake fan must be installed in the kitchen to make up the air that is being exhausted by the hood, and also a three-compartment sink draining to an approved grease interceptor (please note that a set of architectural drawings must be submitted for approval prior to the start of construction).

Q. We have rented a space in a shopping mall to start a 6 chair hair and nail salon. Is there any special equipment we will need?

A. Yes, all beauty and hair salons are required to have special exhaust ventilation systems that eliminate the health hazards created by the soaps and chemicals normally used in these types of establishments (please note that a set of architectural drawings showing the proposed exhaust ventilation system must be submitted for approval prior to the start of construction).

Q. Regarding the previous question, the space was formerly a yogurt shop. What else should we do to insure we pay no more than required for our permit?

A. Hire a New Mexico licensed architect/engineer to help in the design, and a New Mexico licensed contractor should be hired to complete all necessary permits and inspections.