



CITY OF ARVADA

Sunrooms/Patio Enclosures **Contractors Information**

Sunrooms and patio enclosures are considered as unheated uninhabitable space, unless we are advised otherwise. They can be used as habitable space when they are constructed with a foundation of the same type that would be used for any other addition of living space to a home.

If you represent to the homeowner that this is suitable as habitable space, you must advise us of the same when you obtain the permit and the plans will be reviewed accordingly.

Foundation:

Unheated uninhabitable space - Most sunrooms are made of lightweight materials and they may be allowed to be placed on a new or existing concrete slab. If that is your intent, provide engineered plans that clearly indicate the slab has been reviewed for structural integrity, and is acceptable as a foundation.

Heated habitable space - If it is your intent to develop this space into a habitable room, the foundation should be the same as for the rest of the house. Engineered plans are required. An engineered foundation of a different type is acceptable, but they must show a design for insulation, frost protection as well as structural integrity.

Other foundation notes - Column supports should be isolated from the slab.

Plans:

Plans for pre-fabricated sunrooms must bear the stamp of an approved testing agency.

Often those plans cover many various application details. When that is the case, all applicable design details for your specific job must be clearly indicated or highlighted.

Electrical: All sunrooms and patio enclosures are required to be wired in accordance with the 2008 National Electric Code. Only screened in porches are exempt from this requirement.

Note: When bidding a job you should look to see that you are not enclosing an existing electrical panel or meter and that the new roof of the sunroom is not constructed under any overhead service wires. Additional circuits or changes to a panel may require a service panel upgrade. If any of these conditions exist, let us know and we will discuss your options for code compliance.

Insulation: Unheated slab on grade is required to have an R-5 thermal resistance downward from the top of the slab to 36", or downward to the bottom of the slab and then horizontally under the slab for a distance of 36".

Heated slab on grade is required to have a thermal resistance of R-10 installed in the same manner as above. Insulation can also be installed as for shallow foundations. This would allow the insulation to go down 24" and then out away from the slab horizontally 36".

Insulation is not required for existing slabs, if it requires a major disruption of the slab.

Inspections: A foundation inspection is required. The engineer of record can do that inspection and provide us a report. If habitable space, the report must include the insulation inspection.

Any structural connections or modifications must be inspected by a city inspector, or the engineer of record can inspect and provide an inspection report. If structural changes are made, the Building Inspection Division must be advised of such and inspections made. A rough electrical inspection is required. Final electrical and structural inspections must be made.

***Disclaimer**

This handout is provided as a courtesy to direct your attention to some important code concerns. It is not an all inclusive document and various sections may or may not apply to your specific project. This document is informational only and you should refer to the adopted building codes and sections specific to your project to insure total compliance



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Dear Homeowner,

Permit # _____

Following is some information regarding your proposed sunroom or patio enclosure.

The name of a product or company can be misleading. A sunroom or patio enclosure might be referred to as a "four-season's room" or the company may have a similar name. Regardless of the name, sunrooms and patio enclosures are considered as unheated, uninhabitable space, and unless declared otherwise, that is what the permit is issued for. Sunrooms and enclosures are often constructed on a new or existing slab, or some other type of foundation that is not equivalent to the actual house foundation. If the sunroom or patio enclosure is constructed on a properly designed and insulated foundation, it can be classified and used as habitable living space, the same as any other home addition. This will usually require an engineered foundation that addresses foundation depth, insulation and frost protection requirements.

In cases where the structure is constructed on an existing slab, engineered plans are still required to show that the slab can handle the additional loads. Consideration is not usually given to insulation and frost control, since it is considered as a unheated space. While the space is considered unheated and uninhabitable, we understand that you may use it as an extension of your home as some sort of recreational space.

You should understand that unless the sunroom or enclosure is constructed to the same standards as the rest of the house, there could be movement of the slab, if it is constructed on a slab. The slab you use may be existing and may not have moved in the last 20 years, but when additional loads are imposed on it, and with the heat generated from the sunroom itself, conditions are changed such that there can be movement and cracking of the slab. This is most likely to happen when there are freezing or frost conditions outside, since the slab does not have a foundation that provides frost protection like the foundation on the rest of the house. If an additional heat source is added to the enclosure or sunroom, movement or cracking of the slab is even more probable.

Additional information:

1) Electrical:

Regardless of how you use your sunroom or patio enclosure it is required to be wired in accordance with the requirements of the 2008 National Electrical Code. It does not matter if it is considered a "habitable" or "non-habitable" space. A screened in porch, is the only exception to this requirement. The addition of a sunroom or patio enclosure may result in the need to relocate, modify or upgrade your existing electrical panel.

- 2) The building codes do not regulate the quality of construction.
- 3) While you may have a contractual obligation with your contractor, we do not consider the job completed until the final inspection is made and the work is approved by a city inspector.

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