

What is a Wireless Communication Facility or WCF?

A WCF is a cellular tower or other structure with one or more antennas attached that is designed and operated for the transmission and reception of signals to and from multiple transmitter locations to multiple reception locations.

This generally includes large antennas mounted on tall towers, typically on private property, and on top of buildings.

Approval and Installation of WCFs must follow rules in the City's Unified Development Code (UDC)

City of Tucson Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD) oversees the WCF permitting process.

Small Cell Sites are antennas no larger than a total of 6 cubic feet in volume mounted on small cell poles. Small cell communications facilities are reviewed by the City of Tucson Department of Transportation and Mobility.

For more information on these types of projects, please visit:

[Small Cell Poles FAQs and Information](#)

How do I get started?

1. Confirm Site Zoning and WCF Height

Zoning

Look up the Zoning at and next to the proposed WCF location:

Visit [Map Tucson](#)

- In the upper right hand corner of the screen, type in the closest address for the proposed WCF.
- In the lower left hand corner, click on Layers.
- Scroll down to Zoning Regulations, and check the box for Tucson Zoning to turn on the layer.
- Make note of the Zoning label at the WCF site and at any neighboring areas.

Height

Confirm the height of the proposed WCF

Steps continued on pages 2-3

What are the rules regarding Wireless Communication Facility Applications?

The height and complexity of a new WCF installation will determine the process that should be followed for application and approval.

All proposed WCFs and antennas must be in compliance with all Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards regarding potential health and safety hazards.

Any antenna or tower discontinued for 6 months or more must be removed, and the property restored to its previous condition at the expense of the provider or lease holder.

No new towers are permitted within 400 feet of certain designated or scenic gateway routes or overlay zones without following specific guidelines and review by the appropriate department.

*WCF Applications should apply for a **Cell Tower Building Permit** via [Tucson Development Center Online](#)*

WCFs that require a Zoning Examiner or Mayor & Council Special Exception will also apply for this approval as a separate application. For these applications, first request a [pre-application conference](#).

All permit applications are now submitted [online](#).

Applications may be reviewed by: Planning & Development Services (PDSD) Director, Zoning Examiner, and/or Mayor & Council. The Design Review Board may be asked to review and provide a recommendation.

Fees are calculated by PDSD Staff and will vary by the type of approval process

For more information, email PDSD staff at Tucsonrezoning@tucsonaz.gov

Or review Wireless Communications at [Planning & Development Services - Entitlements](#)

Wireless Communication Facility FAQs & Approval Processes

2. Determine the correct Approval Process

After confirming the zoning and height of the proposed WCF, read through the following descriptions to find the correct approval process

- Antenna swap with height increases **OR**
- Co-location with additional antenna **OR**
- Mounting antennas on buildings (private) **OR**
- Mounting antennas on existing structures in right-of-way or public property.
- Mounted antennas are limited to 6 feet above the building, or 15 feet if the antennas are mounted on top of the roof if the building is 40 feet or taller.
- No more than 6 feet of antennas can be seen from the street.

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.4 PDS Director Approval Requirements

Expedited review is available for an additional fee

- Antennas mounted on a new tower & both are concealed or disguised (e.g. with paint) or collocated on an existing structure **AND**
- Tower & antennas compatible with surrounding structures & area **AND**
- New tower set back at least 2x the height of the structure from the boundary of any office & residential zones **AND**
- Tower & antennas 50 feet or less in height. **OR** Tower & antennas no greater than 80 feet tall.

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.6 Zoning Examiner Special Exception Requirements

- Antennas are mounted on New tower or Existing structure in a way that is designed or painted to be compatible with surrounding structures & area & minimize visual impact **AND**

OR

- New tower & antennas are 50 feet or less in height **AND**
- New tower set back at least 2x the height of the structure from the boundary of any office & residential zones

OR

- New tower & antennas are no greater than 80 feet tall **AND**
- New tower set back 500 feet from non-industrially zoned property (except highways or railroads)

- Existing tower setback from boundary of other is at least the height of the structure from the boundary of any office & residential zones **AND**
- Existing tower is replaced or extended up to 6 feet **AND**
- The maximum outward extension is not more than 36 inches as measured perpendicular to the tower

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.5 100' Notice Approval Requirements

- Tower & antennas not permitted by other review processes **AND**
- New towers are separated by a minimum of 1 mile from any existing tower, unless documentation established that no practical alternative exists **AND**
- Tower & antenna is concealed or disguised (painted) **AND**
- All appropriate measures must be taken to reduce the negative increase of visible towers & antennas by the collocation of new antennas on existing towers or with the facilities of other providers that are located or planned for development within the proposed service area **AND**
- Notice is provided to all agents designated at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing before the Zoning Examiner

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.7 Mayor & Council Special Exception Requirements

Wireless Communication Facility Application Checklist

3. Submit your Application

1. Submit a Cell Tower Building Permit application

- a) Follow [Commercial Building Permit](#) checklist
- b) Include the [Communications Tower Engineering Review](#) Form

2. Submit Special Exception request

- a) If a PDSO Director Approval is required, submit the required materials listed below as part of the Cell Tower Building Permit.
- b) If Zoning Examiner or Mayor & Council Special Exception is required, submit a separate application for the requested approval according to the instructions below.

Note: Any application for the installation of a tower or antenna must meet the requirements of UDC 4.9.4.1.3.g - [Use-Specific Standards](#) – Commercial Services Use Group – Communications – Submittal Requirements

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.4 PDSO Director Approval Requirements *Back-up Generator Only*

As an attachment to the **Cell Tower Building Permit** include the following:

- Project narrative – provide:
 1. The generator operating decibel level and evidence that generator meets the requirements of City of Tucson Code, Section 16-31, Excessive Noise,1
 2. Proposed maintenance testing schedule for the generator
 3. Type of fuel to be used
 4. Generator fuel capacity
 5. Fuel spill prevention, containment systems and clean up plan
 6. Security of site
 7. Product information sheets
- Proposed site plan, fully dimensioned, to show:
 1. The distance to any surrounding residentially zoned or developed property/zoning boundaries
 2. The location and use of buildings on surrounding properties
 3. The distance between the parcel property lines and the project site boundaries
- Date of Tucson Mayor & Council meeting approving lease agreement and Ordinance Number (if applicable), or authorization from the COT Real Estate Department.

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.4 and 5

PDSO Director Special Exception Requirements

As an attachment to the **Cell Tower Building Permit** include the following:

- Project Narrative
 - Describe the proposed use and how it will be designed to be compatible with adjoining development and any applicable plan policies
 - Describe the need for the facility, including other facilities you have within a one-mile radius and why they are inadequate/unsuitable to meet the service need
- Proposed site plan
 - Demonstrate the distance to any surrounding residentially zoned or developed property/zoning boundaries, the location and use of buildings on surrounding properties, the distance between the parcel property lines and the project site boundaries, and existing zoning of all adjacent parcels surrounding the special exception site
- A dimensioned detail of the antenna (length, width and depth) and mounting configuration, including stand-off dimension, separation within sector and detail of the array (if applicable)
- Structure/tower setback dimensions from residential and/or office zoning (if applicable)
- Photo simulation
- Last approved site plan
- Use-specific standards statement - describe how each of the applicable use-specific standards have been addressed
- [Neighborhood meeting documentation](#) (for Director Approval with 100' notice)
- Date of Tucson Mayor & Council meeting approving lease agreement and Ordinance Number (if applicable), or authorization from the COT Real Estate Department.

Approval Process: UDC Section 4.9.4.1.6 and 7 Zoning Examiner and Mayor & Council Special Exception Requirements

Apply for a Zoning Examiner or Mayor & Council Special Exception, prior to applying for the Cell Tower Building Permit.

Include the materials listed above, as well as:

- Preliminary Development Package (PDP) – including site analysis and design compatibility report per standards of Admin. Manual 2-03.3 & 4

Wireless Communication Facility Approval Processes

Decision Points

