



5 Common Mistakes

PRIOR TO SIGNING A LEASE

1. Tour the Potential Space with Design and Construction Professionals

I cannot stress this enough. We've seen leases signed without these tours, only to find out well into the design phase that there is no way to get a hood exhaust out of the building, killing the entire project and wasting tens of thousands of dollars. Tour with experienced professionals before you sign.

2. Confirm the Size of the Utilities & Apply for Upgrades Immediately

Again, we've seen leases signed, only to find out well into the design process that a utility upgrade is needed. If an upgrade is deemed necessary, this should be your top priority since the process takes months.

3. Space Zoning

Confirming the potential space is zoned for your specific type of restaurant. Even if a space was previously a restaurant, your type of restaurant may need a 'Change of Use' authorization from the planning department. This takes at least a couple months to obtain, and most municipalities won't allow you to submit for a building permit until this has been completed, pushing your construction start date out.

4. Permit Phasing, Separate Exterior Alterations from Interior

Most exterior renovations will need to go through the planning process, which can take months, and hold up the entire project. Most of the time we suggest submitting the exterior work under a separate permit so the interior permit can get approved and under construction as soon as possible.

5. Ask What's Missing

Ask your contractor bidding the project, what's missing from the plans or from their bid which will be needed to finish? There are always items not on the plans, and you need to budget for these items or you'll be surprised with change orders later. Common ones are fire alarm, fire sprinkler, and permit cost. Yet there can be many other items that are commonly missing as well, such as a grease trap, condensate lines from HVAC units, ansul system, restroom hardware, etc. On many projects the finishes haven't been chosen when the contractor bids the work. In this instance, the question of what's missing is vital to make sure you have the budget for all the parts and pieces needed.

BIDDING PHASE