

CITY OF HOUSTON

COMMERCIAL PERMITTING 101

**Public Works & Engineering Department
Planning & Development Services Division**

This document is a brief overview of the typical commercial building permit process for the City of Houston. Links are added for reference. Please contact Building Code Enforcement for assistance with specific questions pertaining to your individual project: 832.394.9494.

**HOUSTON
PERMITTING CENTER**

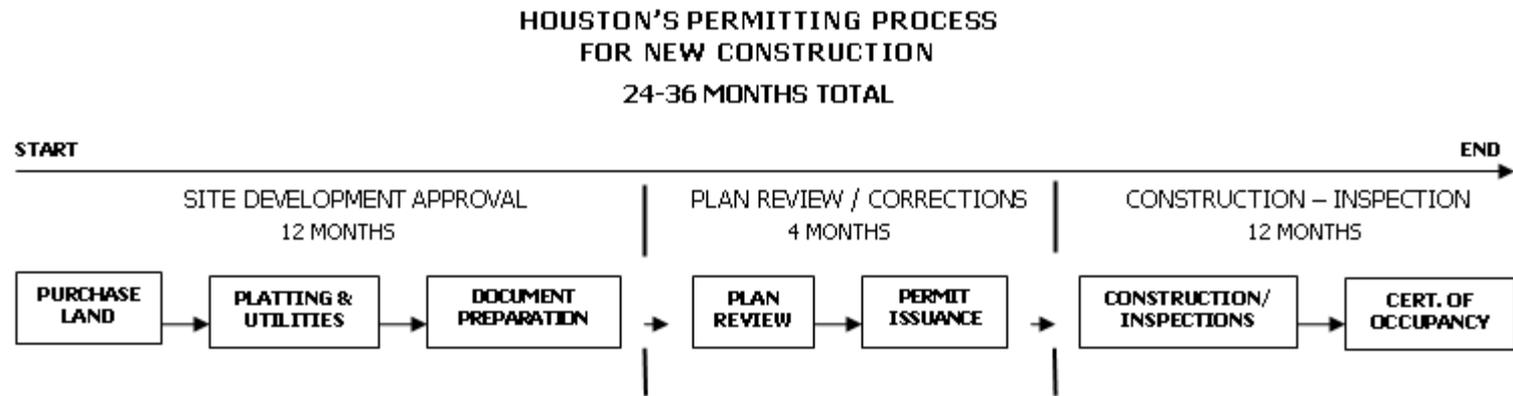
Improved Services

We have instituted the following improvements...

- Increased inspection time on the job site
- The Customer Assistance and Code Development Office, providing ombudsman services
- More Online Services
 - Online appointment scheduling
 - Electronic Plan Review



Planning & Research



Before you buy, consider the following...

Planning & Research (cont.)

- ✓ Whether you can financially and legally build your proposed project
- ✓ Deed restrictions and property liens
- ✓ Survey and property lines (Ensure that your structure can be built in the proposed location)
- ✓ Utility availability (Assess if water and sanitary capacity and utilities are available or if additional fees may be required)
- ✓ Platting (May be required if there is a change of use or occupancy for the property)
- ✓ Parking (Determine requirements for the type of occupancy proposed)
- ✓ Setback (May be required where the proposed business abuts a major thoroughfare)
- ✓ Floodplain (Refer to Chapter 19 of the Code of Ordinances)
- ✓ Existing Certificates of Occupancy

Design Preparation

Does my project require an engineer or architect?

Refer to flow charts from the Texas Boards of [Architectural Examiners](#) & [Professional Engineers](#).

What is the project's scope of work?

- New Construction (ground up)
- Build out (tenant improvement)
- Remodel (extensive and minor)
- Repair (replacing like for like materials)
- Expansion/addition (new square footage)
- Change of Use (converting from one occupancy to another, such as retail to assembly)

What codes are in effect?

- 2012 International Building Code
- 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code
- 2014 National Electrical Code
- 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code
- 2012 International Fire Code
- 2015 International Energy Conservation Code, or ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2013
- City of Houston Design Manual
- City of Houston Code of Ordinances

See also: the [Houston Amendments](#) and the [Design Manual](#).

Additional Requirements

Does the project require a specialized consultant or an additional step?

- Historical Review
- Sprinklers
- Fire Alarm
- Asbestos Survey
- TDLR Accessibility Review
- Elevation Certificates
- Electronic Locks

Who can purchase what permits and when?

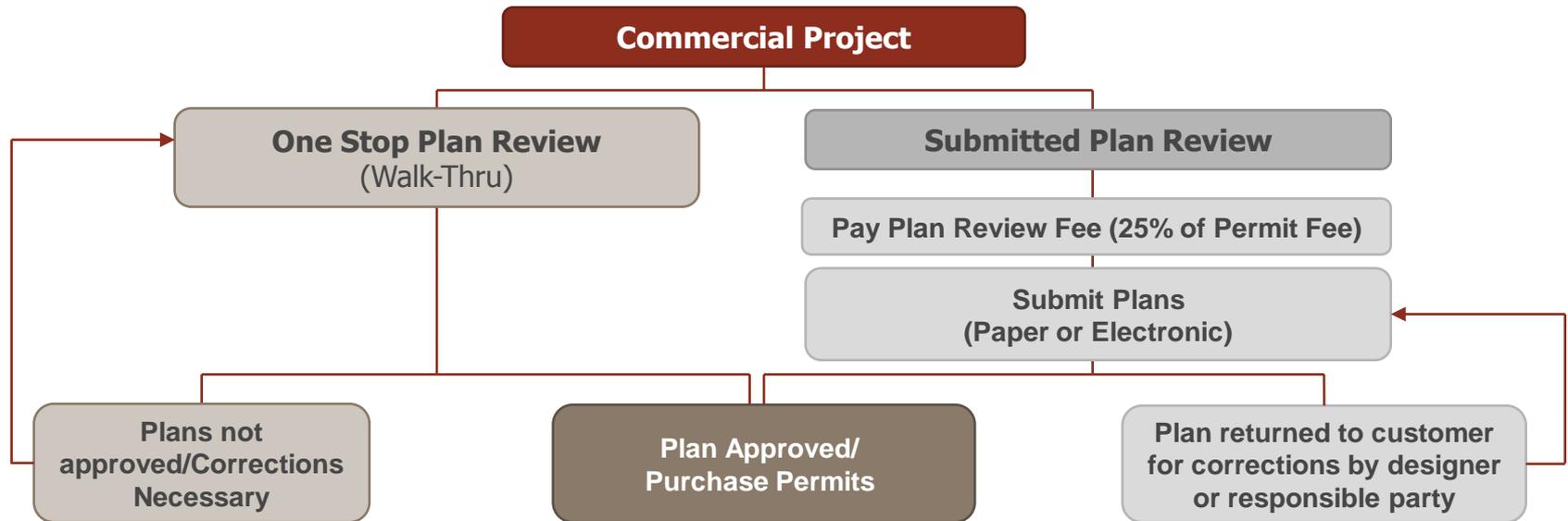
- The building permit may be purchased by the owner, agent, contractor. General contractors are not required to be licensed.
- Licensed contractors can purchase trade permits after the building permit has been sold.
 - Electrical
 - Mechanical
 - Plumbing
 - Sprinklers
 - Sidewalk

Application & Plan Submittal

- Building Permit Application (with assigned project number)
- 2 complete sets of plans (4 sets if hazmat/high piled storage is involved)
- Fill & Grade Worksheet
- Storm and Water Utility Letter
- Waste Water Capacity Reservation Letter
- Asbestos Survey
- Energy Software Report
- HFD Owner's Statement of Intended Use for Storage Occupancies
- Plan Review Prerequisites Form (Ensure prerequisites are met)

Remember: Addresses are critical and must be verified for new construction!

Plan Review Process



Plan Review Process (cont.)

Other Plan Review Services and Options:

- One Stop Plan Review: Allows customers with minor remodels/lease space build outs to have a plan analyst review plans and have the permit issued in the same day if certain restrictions are met; including 30 minute maximum plan review.
- Customer Paid Overtime: For projects that have been through one complete review and have approvals from all outside departments. Other qualifications and criteria applies.
- Quick Start Program: For projects exceeding \$1 million valuation with a limited number of reviews remaining, a 24 hour turnaround is available.)
- LEED Incentive
- Plan Analyst and Design Professional Appointments: Service available in order to resolve outstanding comments for approval. The design professional for the plans must attend the appointment.
- Check Project Status Online

Routing Submitted Plans

Start

Regulatory Compliance Coordinator

First Screening/Routing

1. Plans are checked to ensure all prerequisites are met.
2. If prerequisites are met, Supervisor assigns plans to a Structural Plan Analyst.
3. Regulatory Compliance Coordinator indicates which sections will need to review plans and routes them.

Structural Plan Analyst

Final Review / Processing

Customer Pick-Up

Purchase Permit or Resubmission of Plans

Approved Plans: Purchase permit.
Rejected Plans: Pick up plans. Rejection comments are attached to the plans. Make necessary corrections and resubmit.

Departmental Reviews

Plans are routed to the following departments (as applicable) in the order shown:

- ◆ HazMat/High Piled
- ◆ Fire Alarms
- ◆ Taps & Meters
- ◆ Planning
- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Flood
- ◆ Health

Building Code Enforcement Review

Plans are routed to the following internal departments (as applicable) by date order:

- ◆ Mechanical
- ◆ Electrical
- ◆ Plumbing
- ◆ Storm Drainage
- ◆ Structural

Phased Permitting

The city allows phased permitting for each stage of construction prior to submitting or permitting the next phase. This process may be useful for fast-track projects where design continues beyond the schedule to break ground.

For example:

- Site Grading
- Site Paving and Underground Utilities
- Site and Foundation (requires recorded plat)
- Superstructure (concrete buildings, or non-rated steel)
- Shell only
- Shell and core
- Build outs by floor (non combustible only)



Note: Phased permits must be obtained in order of construction.

Deferred Submittals

The city allows deferred submittals for elements of a building that are not typically designed by the time the general design plans are submitted for code review.

For example:

Deferrals

- Truss details
- Curtain walls
- Pre-cast concrete (non-rated)
- Metal buildings (non-rated)
- Pre-fab storage racks

Required

- Sprinklers
- Electronic locks

Note: Sprinkler plans and electronic lock plans are required to be submitted separately, not deferred.



Inspections and Utility Release

- Once permit is purchased, work may begin
- Plans and permits must remain on the job site for inspections
- Inspections are required at various stages of construction
 - **To schedule an inspection**, call the IVR (713.222.9922) or [click here](#).
- Temporary Utilities may be obtained after all permits are purchased
 - Temporary Cut In / Temporary Gas - Permit must be purchased
- All revisions must be approved prior to Final Inspection
- All deferred submittal items must be completed prior to Final Inspection
- After all inspections are complete, request Certificate(s) of Occupancy
- Remodels/Repairs are usually issued a Certificate of Compliance

Online Permits Page

Welcome to the City of Houston's Online Permits Website

iPermits - Customer / Contractor Portal

[First Time User](#)

[Login](#)

For questions, please contact us at rmcacd@houstontx.gov

Building Fee Estimator

[Fee Estimator](#)

To download the Building Code Enforcement's Permit Fee Schedule, [Click Here](#)

Schedule Building Code Enforcement Inspections

[Schedule Inspections and View Inspections History](#)

To register for the Building Code Enforcement's Inspection Notification System to receive inspection results by e-mail or cell phone [Click Here](#).

Check Permit Status

Plan Review

[Plan Review Status \(Real Time Pages\)](#)

Permits Sold

[Search for Sold Permits \(sold permits for the last 3 years\)](#)

Other Information

[Building Code Enforcement Main Page](#)

**Purchase Permits
(Certain restrictions apply)**

**Estimate Building
Permit Fee**

Schedule Inspections

Check the Status of Plans

**Search for Permits Sold
(In the last 3 years)**

**Code Enforcement
Home Page**

eSERVICES Page



HPC eServices hpcservices.org

Welcome to the Houston Permitting Center's eServices Web Portal

Convenience with a click!



eSERVICES is the Houston Permitting Center's self-service portal—designed to make it easier for you to achieve your goals while complying with the City's regulations.

Click on the tabs below to learn about our available eServices. More convenient self-service options will be added in the near future as we continue working to improve your customer experience.

NOW AVAILABLE: Electronic Plan Review

Electronic Plan Review (EPR) is currently available for:

- > Residential building construction projects (except One-Stop)
- > Commercial building construction projects (except One-Stop)
- > Projects within the City's right-of-way or tying to City utilities (Office of the City Engineer)

Use of EPR is voluntary, but a project must be submitted entirely online or entirely by paper. The two submission methods cannot be mixed.

Two online systems — **iPermits** and **ProjectDox** — are used to complete specific functions in the plan review process. Separate logins are required for each system; however, the same email address and password may be used to set up each system account.

- > iPermits Portal
- > Online Queuing Service
- > ProjectDox Portal
- > eServices Support

Resources

- Commercial EPR User Guide
- Office of the City Engineer EPR User Guide
- ProjectDox Installation Guide
- Residential EPR User Guide

Quick Links

- iPermits Portal
- ProjectDox Portal
- Online Permits Website
- Customer Satisfaction Survey



CHAT NOW!

December 2016

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17

EPR User Guides and ProjectDox Installation Guide

Quick Links to iPermits, ProjectDox, and Online Permits Page

Introduction to iPermits and ProjectDox Portals

Online Queuing Service (Schedule Appointment)

Related Fees

FEES ^{1, 2} SCOPE	Development Review Fee (paid prior to submittal)	WCR Application Fee (paid when submitted)	Impact Fee (prior to building permit)	Building Permit Fee (prior to trade permit fees)
New Construction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Addition	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interior Build Out		✓ ³	✓ ³	✓
Remodel		✓ ³	✓ ³	✓

1. Plan Review fee is 25% of permit fee (non refundable)
2. Flood Plain fee (only if applicable)
3. For change of use or added load

[Click here](#) to see a complete copy of the Permit Fees.

Things to Remember

- **Applications**

The original commercial building application is required to purchase the building permit. If the application is lost or misplaced, only the original applicant may complete a duplicate application.

- **Plan Review**

Projects over \$50,000 require a TDLR number for the architectural barriers act.

Some of the frequently missed plan review prerequisites include:

- Water Availability Letters
- Engineered structural plans (sealed and signed)
- Hazmat/Hi Piled Form or Exemption Form
- Code Analysis
- Submitting final design plans and not preliminary plans

- **Taps & Meters**

Apply for the letter of availability prior to submitting plans

- Response will be mailed to you (WCR letter)
- Pay impact fees
- Submit impact fee receipt and WCR letter with plans

[Top 10 Things to Know About Permitting](#)

[Frequently Missed Inspection Items](#)

Need More Information?

Please call us:

- General Information
832.394.9494
- Commercial Plan Review
832.394.8810
- Planning
832.394.9091
- Taps and Meters
832.394.8888
- Inspections
713.222.9922

Or visit us online:

- [Building Code Enforcement](#)
- [Online Permits Page](#)
- [Planning & Development Department](#)
- [Houston Fire Department](#)
- [City of Houston General Information](#)
- [Flood Maps](#)
- [Houston Permitting Center Website](#)
- [City of Houston Website](#)

Or email us at rmcacd@houstontx.gov.



This presentation can be found online at
houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/publications.html