



Guide for Metal Recyclers

According to the City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 7, Article III, Section 7, a metal recycler means any person who:

1. Engages in the business of purchasing aluminum cans; or
2. Engages in the business of utilizing machinery or equipment for the processing of or manufacturing of iron, steel or nonferrous metallic scrap and whose principal product is scrap iron, scrap steel or nonferrous metallic scrap for remelting purposes; or
3. Operates or maintains a scrap metal yard or other place in which used or previously purchased metal items or scrap metal is collected or kept for shipment, sale, or transfer.

WARNING If you commence operations prior to securing a Permit from the City of Houston you will be in violation of the Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 1956 Sec. 1956.003 LOCAL LAW; CRIMINAL PENALTY (f) A person commits an offense if the person owns or operates a metal recycling entity and does not hold a license or permit required by a county, municipality, or other political subdivision as authorized under Subsection (b). An offense under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor.

Before you complete an application, some things to consider are:

1. **Have you read the Ordinances that apply to the Metal Recyclers License?** If not, please refer to the City of Houston Code of Ordinances, Chapter 7, Article III, Section 7 as well as Chapter 28, Article I, Section 28-34.
2. **Is the property line for your business more than 300 feet from the property line of a church, school or private residence?** If so, according to Chapter 28, Article I, Section 28-34, it is unlawful to operate or cause to be operated a lot used for open storage by a metal recycler/secondhand metal dealer within 300 feet of an existing church, school, or residence. Should you need assistance with measuring these distances at your location, please contact Sgt. McGinty at 281-405-6560.
3. **Is your business buying scrap metal types that are not allowed by law?** "Scrap metal" is defined as a direct product or byproduct of any form of a manufactured, shaped, or processed iron, steel, aluminum, brass, copper, lead, tin, zinc, or other nonferrous metallic material. For a State of Texas complete list of allowable metals, please click [HERE](#).
4. **Is your business subject to the requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for storm water discharges from industrial facilities?**
 - a. To help answer this, here are a few questions to consider:
 - i. Is your facility open-air?
 - ii. Is your metal stored on concrete slabs?
 - iii. Will metal be stored outside in the open?
 - b. If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please contact TCEQ at 512-239-4671. Ask for the "Storm Water Team."
5. **Are you classified as an alien legally residing in the United States?** If yes, be sure to provide your Work ID or Permit Number.
6. **Are you a mobile metal recycler, dealer or reseller?** If so, please call Sgt. McGinty at 281-405-6560 for more information.
7. **Are you the owner of the property where the business will be located?** If yes, you must provide proof when you submit your completed application. A simple address search on the Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD) [website](#) will establish the owner of the property in question. If you're not the owner, then you must secure written proof from the owner that they know you are planning to operate a scrap metal business on their property.

Once you have answered all of these questions and believe you have the ability to legally operate a metal recycler business, please fill out the metal recycler application.



Metal Recyclers' Step-by-Step

1. Complete the application. The materials can be mailed to Commercial Permitting/Metal Recyclers PO Box 1561 Houston Texas 77251-1561 **OR** hand-delivered to Administration & Regulatory Affairs' (ARA) Commercial Permitting Department at the Houston Permitting Center at 1002 Washington Avenue Houston, TX 77002. To complete your application, you will need:
 - a. A federal sales tax ID **OR** state sales tax ID
 - b. A copy of your Certificate of Occupancy
 - c. A current Drivers' License, an identification card issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety or another state within the United States, **OR** a United States military identification card.
 - d. If the owner of the business is in the United States as a legal alien, they will need to provide either a valid work ID or valid work permit number.
2. Once your application is completed and reviewed, a criminal background check will be run and a police officer will come to your facility for an inspection.
3. Each officer completes a full report indicating if the facility passed or failed the inspection. The officer provides the original report to the ARA's Commercial Permitting Division and a copy of the report to the facility owner.
4. If your facility passed inspection, you must obtain a surety bond in the amount of \$10,000.
5. After your inspection, to complete the permitting process and acquire your permit, you must have:
 - a. An original surety bond in the amount of \$10,000
 - b. A copy of the HPD inspection report
 - c. Your payment
6. These materials can be mailed to: Commercial Permitting/Metal Recyclers PO Box 1561 Houston Texas 77251-1561 **OR** hand-delivered to the Commercial Permitting Department at the Houston Permitting Center at 1002 Washington Avenue Houston, TX 77002. We accept checks or money orders via the mail; we accept cash, checks, money orders or credit card (MC/V/DC/Amex) at the Houston Permitting Center.
7. Once you have paid for your permit, it will be printed and given to you. If you mail in your information, we will mail you back a permit and a receipt. If you come to the Houston Permitting Center, your permit will be immediately available.
8. Once you have received your permit, it must be posted at your facility.
9. If your business did not pass inspection, you will receive a letter and a copy of the inspection report. You have 2 options if your business did not pass the inspection:
 - a. You can resolve any problems that the officer highlighted in the inspection and schedule another inspection.
 - b. You can appeal the decision to reject the application. To do so you must submit a written request for a hearing to the Director of Administration & Regulatory Affairs within 30 days of the date of the rejection letter. The hearing officer shall determine whether the metal recycling facility at the subject location complies with the requirements of Section 7-51 – 7-76 of the Municipal Code.

If you have further questions about measurements or inspections, please call the Metal Theft unit at 281-405-6560.

If you have further questions about applications or this step-by-step process, please call ARA's Commercial Permitting Division at 832-394-8803.