

COMMERCIAL PERMIT FAQ (12/2025)

DEPARTMENT OF CODES AND BUILDING SAFETY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON

Permitting Instructions

- **How do I apply for a commercial building permit?**

Complete the [Commercial Permit Application](#) and submit it to the [Zoning Help Desk](#). Questions about the application or submittal process should be directed to the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

- **Can an architect submit the permit application?**

Yes, an architect can complete the application form and submit plans.

- **Does the general contractor have to be determined at the time of application?**

A GC is not required to submit but does need to be determined before the permit can be issued.

- **Is landlord approval required to submit for a building permit?**

No

- **Is an asbestos survey required for submittal?**

An asbestos survey will be required by the [Health Department](#) during permit review for demolition permits within commercially zoned properties.

- **When is a Master permit required?**

A Master Permit allows Metro Agencies and departments to review an entire site to ensure the entire project meets Metro Nashville local ordinances and guidelines. A Master Permit is required for multi-family (3 or more units) and mixed-use projects:

- a. If multiple buildings on one parcel.
- b. If residential units are stacked and individually owned.
- c. If there are both residential and commercial spaces within one building.
- d. If there will be 3 or more attached townhomes.
- e. If 3 or more detached single-family homes on one parcel.

The Master permit will allow for the zoning, site, and Fire Life Safety reviews to be reviewed at one time. A Master Permit is not at a construction permit. Individual building permits can be applied for after the Master permit is issued.

- **How do I apply for a Master permit application?**


Complete the [Commercial Permit Application](#) and submit it to the [Zoning Help Desk](#). Questions about the application or submittal process should be directed to the [Zoning Help Desk](#). Further questions about the actual building permits should be directed to [Zoning Help Desk](#).

Departmental Reviews

- **After I submit my application what do I do next?**

A zoning examiner will provide a permit checklist by e-mail. The permit checklist will identify which Metro Agencies and departments must review for approval. Contact the [Zoning Help Desk](#) if you have further questions about the [permitting process](#).

Below is an example of what the checklist will look like, but the tracked departments may change based on the project and the parcel's zoning. The first step after receiving this permit checklist is to submit plans for review. Many reviewing departments will need to review plans so requesting a review will not be productive until plans have been submitted. See the [Commercial Plan Requirements](#) and the [Commercial Plan Submittal Instructions](#).



Metropolitan Government
of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee
Department of Codes and Building Safety
800 President Ronald Reagan Way, Nashville, TN 37210

4598350

APPLICATION FOR BUILDING COMMERCIAL - NEW / CACN - T2024091984
THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

PARCEL: _____ APPLICATION DATE: 10/11/2024
 SITE ADDRESS: _____

SAMPLE PERMIT CHECKLIST

PARCEL OWNER: _____
 APPLICANT: _____
 PURPOSE: _____

*Before a building permit can be issued for this project, the following approvals are required.
 The Applicant is responsible for contacting and providing any plans or other information to the individual agencies listed below.*

REVIEWING DEPARTMENTS	REVIEW STATUS	CONTACT INFORMATION
[A] Site Plan Review		@nashville.gov
[A] Zoning Review		@nashville.gov
[A] Zoning Sidewalk Requirement Review		
[A] Zoning Street Tree Requirement Review		
[B] Fire Life Safety Review On Bldg App		@nashville.gov
[B] Fire Sprinkler Requirement		@nashville.gov
[B] Fire Alarm Requirement		@nashville.gov
[B] Building Plans Received		@nashville.gov
[B] Building Plans Review		
[D] Grading Plan Review For Bldg App		@nashville.gov
[E] Cross Connect Review For Bldg App		@nashville.gov
Sewer Discharge Review On Bldg App		@nashville.gov
[E] Sewer Availability Review For Bldg		@nashville.gov
[E] Sewer Variance Approval For Bldg		@nashville.gov
[E] Water Availability Review For Bldg		@nashville.gov
[A] Noise Mitigation Bldg App Review		@nashville.gov
[E] Water Variance Approval For Bldg		@nashville.gov
[F] Address Review On Bldg App		@nashville.gov
[F] Ramps & Curb Cuts Review For Bldg A		@nashville.gov
[F] Solid Waste Review On Bldg App		@nashville.gov
[J] Planning Zoning Review - CA		@nashville.gov

Review Status Key

If the space in the middle column is blank, no action has been taken by the department, or information required has not been received.

EMAIL PDF - Plans were received via e-mail.

EPLANS - Plans were received electronically.

APPROVED - Plans have been approved by the assigned department and their review is complete for the application.

REVIEWED - Plan has been approved by the assigned department and their review is complete for the application.

COND or RVWCOND - The reviewer has a conditional approval. The permit can be issued but there are issues that may be addressed. Typically, the reviewer will make note of the conditions. The conditions will require some missing information to be provided, or some issues are noted on the reviewed plans and the issue is expected to be coordinated in the field between the contractor and design team – any revisions required must be on site for the inspectors.

IGNORE - The department does not need to review this application. The permit can be issued with this status.

REJECTED - The reviewer has rejected the submitted information and will need to be contacted to resolve the issue before the permit can be issued.

*A second status line will be added if the review is rejected. The rejected review will not go away, but a new line will be added to show APPROVED, REVIEWED, COND OR RVWCOND once updated plans have been received and approved.

UNDER REVIEW - The reviewer has begun the process of review but has not completed their review.

The permit cannot be issued until the review is completed with an APPROVED, REVIEWED, RVWCOND, COND, or IGNORE status.

- **Are separate permits required for each department?**

The Codes Building Permit may require department review and approval by various Metro Agencies such as Water and Sewer, Stormwater, Health, Fire Life and Safety, Planning Commission, Nashville Department of Transportation, Historic, ect. The reviews may happen simultaneously once plans are submitted.

Some agencies, but not all require a separate permit in addition to the Codes Building Permit. For example, a Grading Permit may be required depending on project size. If the property is located within a Historic Overlay, then a Historic Permit may be required in addition to a Codes Building Permit. The Codes Building Permit and additional Metro Agency Permits can be reviewed simultaneously but the Codes Building Permit will be issued last.

- **Which zoning districts and zoning overlays require Planning approval?**

Parcels located within the DTC, Commercial PUD, UDO, SP, or a Neighborhood Landmark Overlay. You can find a property's zoning and check for any overlays using [Parcel Viewer](#).

Plans Review

- **Can I submit paper plans?**

No

- **Can plans be mailed in for submittal?**

No

- **Can plans be walked in?**

No

- **Can plans be submitted by e-mail?**

In a few cases, Metro Codes will accept plans as a PDF. If the plans are too large to e-mail as an attachment, then you must submit plans through our [plan submittal site](#).

- **How do I submit large sets of plans electronically?**

After you have a permit application number you may upload plans. See the [Commercial Plan Submittal Instructions](#). Should you have further questions on how to upload plans contact [Ronya Bomar](#).

- **Do building plans or floor plans have to be stamped?**

See the [Commercial Plan Requirements](#). Should you have further questions about plan requirements contact [Ronya Bomar](#).

- **What are the current building codes being used?**

LIST OF CODES ADOPTED BY METRO NASHVILLE CODES DEPARTMENT

2024 International Building Code, w/local amendments*

2024 International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, w/ local amendments*

2024 International Energy Conservation Code, w/ local `amendments*

2017 International ICC/ANSI A117.1 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities*

2024 International Mechanical Code, w/ local `amendments*

2024 International Fuel Gas Code, w/ local `amendments*

2024 International Plumbing Code, w/ local `amendments*

2023 National Electrical Code, w/ local amendments*

LIST OF CODES ADOPTED BY METRO FIRE DEPARTMENT

2024 International Fire Code, w/local amendments*

*See Chapter 16 of Metro Code of Laws for local code amendments

On July 15, 2025, the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County unanimously approved final passage of BL2025-898, officially adopting the 2024 International Codes Council's building, trades, accessibility, and energy standards. All plans and applications submitted after the effective date of July 16, 2025. For projects with preliminary designs under the 2018 International Building Code, Metro Codes is implementing a 180-day grace period.

Contact a [Commercial Plan Reviewer](#) with questions about the commercial building code.

Review [Fire and Life Safety Codes Plan Review | Nashville.gov](#) for questions about the Fire Code.

- **Will a COMcheck energy compliance be required?**

Yes, if the energy use is affected because of a change in use, or any new building addition, new lighting, new mechanical systems – these are dependent upon the extent of the revisions/additions. Plans should be submitted at the time the building plans are submitted.

- **Are structural calculations required?**

No, but the design criteria, such as the current adopted code, is to be identified, along with a list of any special inspections required for the project.

- **Are specifications required?**

No, Plan reviewers do not review specifications – all code-related criteria is to be indicated in the drawings.

- **Is an architectural site plan acceptable?**

A stamped architectural site plan is acceptable for site plan review. The site plan should be submitted electronically along with the building plans unless the entire plan package can be submitted as a PDF through e-mail.

- **Is there an appeal process available for the Building and Fire Code requirements?**

Yes, contact any [Building Plan reviewer](#) and they can assist with the process.

- **Are fire sprinkler or fire alarm drawings needed with original plan submittal?**

Fire Sprinkler or Fire Alarm drawings do not have to be submitted at the time the building plans are submitted.

Contact [Fire Life Safety](#) for fire sprinkler code or plan requirements.

- **Do I need to submit plans separately to each individual reviewing agency?**

Most reviewing departments and Metro Agencies will be able to access the electronic plans once uploaded. If they are not able to or require paper plans, they will make that request at the time of review. **You must contact them to request the review of the electronic plans.**

Permitting Timeline

- **How long does the permitting process take from the time of application to issuance?**

Many factors determine the permit processing length such as permit type, scope of project, accuracy of plan submittal, and review turnaround time of other Metro Agencies outside of Metro Codes. Confirm with Metro Agencies outside of Metro Codes to determine their approximate review timelines.

- **What is the initial and re-review timeline for Architectural plan review on larger projects?**

Plan reviewers are required to review within 30 days upon receipt of the drawing file.

Other Metro departments apart from Codes (ie. Water, Stormwater, NDOT, etc.) may need to review the application and we cannot speak to how long their reviews will take.

- **Is an expedited review process available?**

No

- **Is there a third-party review process available for commercial plan review?**

- Yes, applicants can choose to go through third-party plans review for the commercial plans and Fire Marshal reviews.
- A permit is still required with Metro Codes. The scope of work on the permit must indicate that you will be using a third-party plans reviewer as well as designating which Third Party Organization will be used.
- Once the permit application number has been assigned, contact Ronya.Bomar@Nashville.Gov to provide the application number and name of the approved third-party organization to ensure the plans are assigned as third-party review.
- Third party plans review is accepted for commercial new construction, additions, renovations, and tenant finish out permitting. Master permit applications are NOT ELIGIBLE for third party review. The commercial plans and fire marshal reviews for Master permit applications will be completed by Metro staff.
- You will still be required to seek permit approvals listed on the permit checklist for the remaining agencies and departments. Third party reviews are accepted for the commercial plans and Fire Marshal reviews only.
- The Third-Party Organization needs to be registered with the State of Tennessee for us to accept their TPO reviewed plans.

Permit Fees

- **What is the cost of the building permit?**

The Codes Plan Review Fee, Codes Zoning Review and inspections are calculated within the [building permit fee](#).

- **Is there a fee associated with each agency review?**

Additional fees associated with other Metro Agencies may require a separate payment to the individual agency. You will need to contact each specific reviewing agency outside of Codes to determine their permit fees. For example, Metro Water and Stormwater will charge separate fees for their permits. If the property is located within a zoning district or zoning overlay that requires a Planning review, they may charge an additional fee for review of the Codes Building Permit.

- **Do fees need to be paid at the time of application?**

The Codes Building Permit Fee will not need to be paid until the Codes Building Permit is issued. Speak directly with other Metro Agencies about when their fees will need to be paid.

- **What is the permit fee for a Master Permit?**

\$50

- **Does the city charge impact fees?**

The Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County does not charge impact fees.

- **Methods of payment**

Pay online with a credit card, pay by check at [Metro Codes](#) (make checks to “Metro Codes”), cash payments must be paid with exact amount. If you need further assistance with payment, contact [Permit Issuance](#).

Permit Issuance

- **Will separate permits be required for sub-contractors?**

Yes, trade permits. After the Codes Building Permit is issued contact [Permit Issuance](#) to apply for a trade permit OR the contractor can apply online for the trade permit through [E-Permits](#).

- **Do contractors have to be licensed with your city?**

Yes, contact [Permit Issuance](#) for requirements and how to register.

- **Do you need the contractor’s certificate of insurance?**

Yes, contact [Permit Issuance](#) for requirements and how to submit.

- **When does the permit expire?**

6 months after application if the permit has not been issued. After issuance, there must be an activity (an inspection) within 6 months, and after an activity has been recorded there is a 2-year timeframe to complete construction and inspections.

- **What do I do if my permit has expired?**

Contact the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

Construction

- **What are the allowable working hours – interior & exterior?**

Ordinance NO. BL 2015-1016 with regards to noise at construction sites:

Minimize impact of backup beepers and alarms for all on-site construction equipment. In addition, avoid blasting, hoe ramming, jack hammering, and any other outdoor construction activities between the hours of 7pm and 7am, Monday – Saturday and all Sunday. Exemptions from these regulations may be found in 9.30.020 of the Metropolitan Code of Ordinances.

- **Who do I contact with questions about inspections?**

The [Codes Building Permit Inspection Division](#)

- **Who should I contact if there have been changes made to the plans after the permit is issued?**

Once a permit is issued, the inspectors in the field determine the progress, and any changes need to be coordinated with them. If the inspectors determine the changes are significant and will require a review by the plan reviewers, a new permit will need to be started and reviews completed, a revised set of documents will need to be provided – request that a CACE permit application be created for revisions to an existing permitted project - refer to Item #1 in this list for the procedure to follow.

- **What is the process if the contractor for the project is changed while the project is under construction?**

Contact the [Zoning Help Desk](#) and request the instructions for a Change of Contractor permit.

- **What's the permit closeout process?**

A certificate of completion or certificate of compliance (or similar) will be issued upon completion. After all your inspections are completed and passed, including your trade permits (if you have any), you will need to request a U&O letter which will be processed and emailed. To make request for the U&O letter contact the [Inspection Division](#).

Additional Permits

- **Is a Demolition permit available?**

Yes, submit the [Commercial Application](#) to the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

- **Is an interior demolition permit allowed while the building plan review is in process?**

Yes, a separate permit can be applied for to do interior demolition. However, the permit will still go through the same department reviews as the Codes Building/Rehab Permit. It **may** be quicker to obtain but will still require approvals from other Metro Agencies. A separate permit will be required for the reconstruction work. Submit the [Commercial Application](#) to the [Zoning Help Desk](#). **The scope of work must indicate this is for interior demolition only and that a separate permit is being applied for the reconstruction.**

- **Are separate permits required for signage?**

Yes, a separate permit will be required for signage. A signage permit will not be issued until there is a permit on file establishing the zoning use of the business with Codes. The use can be established through a Codes Building Permit and/or a Use and Occupancy permit.

- **Is a separate permit required for a free-standing ATM?**

Yes, a separate permit will be required for a free-standing ATM. Submit the [Commercial Application](#) to the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

- **Are building permits required for electric car charging stations?**

An electric car charging station does require a Codes building permit if it is mounted to a structure. You will also need to apply for an electrical permit after the Codes building permit is issued. If the car charging station is not mounted to a structure then you will only need to apply for an electrical permit. Submit the [Commercial Application](#) to the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

- **Do I need a permit to move my business into an existing location?**

You may need a [Use and Occupancy](#) permit. Contact the [Zoning Help Desk](#) with further questions.

- **Do I need a permit to install a racking system?**

Yes, a permit is required to install a racking system. A separate permit is not required if the racking system is reflected in a renovation, tenant finish out, or new construction permit. Submit the [Commercial Application](#) to the [Zoning Help Desk](#).

- **Do I need a permit for a conveyor system?**

An electrical permit will be required.

A building permit may be required for a conveyor system. Plans will need to be submitted for a preliminary review to determine if a building permit will be required. Submit Plans to the [Zoning Help Desk](#) and request a determination if a permit will be required.