



# Department of Building Inspection

## Frequently Asked Questions



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[www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi)

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About the construction permit process in the City and County of San Francisco

*April 2009*

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**1. How do I find out the status of my building permit application?**

You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088, or visit 1660 Mission Street, 1st Floor Public Information Counter or track online at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

**2. What is a Pre-Application Plan Review? How does it work?**

There are times when an applicant is not sure whether specific areas of the proposed design are code compliant as interpreted by the Department of Building Inspection and whether certain existing non-conforming conditions can remain as is. Before committing considerable time and resources on the final design, the applicant can request a Pre-Application Review to address such questions, clarify specific code issues, and check whether the Department of Building Inspection will accept the interpretation and application of specific code sections. Pre-Application review is not intended for general overall review.

Request for a Pre-Application review must be submitted in writing, along with payment, to Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services. List the items in the form of specific questions with the pertinent code references and include applicable drawings and documents and the applicant's own interpretations regarding each question asked. The applicants are expected to conduct their own detailed research before submitting their questions. Again, please note that this service is not intended for general overall review. After receipt of all of the aforementioned required items, the applicant will be notified of a meeting date within three business days or will receive a written response of the inquiries within ten business days. The initial fee covers the first two review hours. Additional fees may apply if more time is needed for review.

If review is required by the San Francisco Fire Department, Fire fee is also required for a minimum charge of two hours. A separate copy of all the required items as mentioned above must be submitted to the San Francisco Fire Department Plan Check, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

For further information and to obtain a pre-application plan review service information package, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services at (415) 558-6133 or download at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi) under Forms and Handouts.

**3. Does the Department of Building Inspection offer Premium Plan Review Service? How does it work? Is there a fee involved?**

Premium Plan Review Service is offered by the Department of Building Inspection's plan review staff and does not involve any other City agencies such as Planning or Fire Department. The turnaround time depends on the size and complexity of the project. A written request for Premium Plan Review Service is required indicating approval from the appropriate Division Manager. A guaranteed plan review turnaround time for a thorough, complete plan review with comments and corrections will be established. The cost of the Premium Plan Review fee will be based on 50% of plan review fee. For more information, you may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services at (415) 558-6133 or the Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088.

**4. Where do I review soil reports? Can I get a copy of the soil reports?**

The soils reports are available for public review at the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services during normal business hours. You may submit a written request if a copy is required. The requested copy will be ready within ten business days from the receipt date. Fees apply. For additional information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services at (415) 558-6133.

**5. What is the permit fee to file for a building permit or to submit plans?**

The permit fee depends on the project valuation. You need to contact the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Central Permit Bureau at (415) 558-6070 for a permit fee estimate. Depending on the project, you may be required to pay fees to the San Francisco Fire Department, Planning Department, SF Department of Public Health, Department of Public Works, School District, as well as to the Department of Building Inspection. When an application is submitted, the Counter Plans Examiner determines which agencies will review your application. You may also access the 2007 San Francisco Building Code Fee tables at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi), under Fees.

**6. What is the turnaround time for the approval of a building permit?**

The turnaround time for the approval of a building permit depends on the scope of the work. Permits for work not requiring plans such as minor repairs, installing kitchen cabinets, repairing stucco, replacing drywall, and re-roofing are reviewed and can be issued over-the-counter. Work requiring plans such as structural additions have to be routed to several Department of Building Inspection divisions and/or other City agencies (San Francisco Fire Department, Planning Department, etc.) for review and approval. When you submit your application, you will be notified of the stations required to review your plans by DBI staff. For additional information, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services at (415) 558-6133.

**7. What does it mean when a building permit application is “on hold”?**

Usually a building permit application is put on hold when additional information is required by the plans examiner reviewing your building permit application. Additional information may consist of calculations and/or revised drawings. Plan Reviewer / Plans Examiner's comments will be sent to the contact person(s) of the building permit application when it is put on hold. For more information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 or the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Permit Processing Center at (415) 558-6644.

**8. Where do I submit revisions to my building permit application *that is currently under review*?**

Revision(s) initiated by the permit applicant may be submitted by appointment with the plan examiner who is currently reviewing the building permit application.

Responding to plans examiner's comments on project(s) for code compliance must make a recheck appointment with the assigned plans examiner prior to their submittal.

To schedule an appointment, please contact the plans examiner directly. You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 for contact information or access



the DBI Directory at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

Responding to the Planning Department correspondence may be submitted their correspondent to the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Permit Processing Center at (415) 558-6644.

**9. How do I submit revisions to my *issued* building permit?**

You will need to fill out a new permit application form and under the General Description (item # 16 on Form 3/8), indicate what permit application number you are revising and provide a brief description of the changes. Depending on the scope of work, you would have to submit two sets of stamped and wet signed revised plans; two sets of calculations (structural and mechanical/energy); two sets of soils reports; two sets of reference plans, etc. If you need more information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.

**10. How do I request an extension for a building permit application currently under review? How many extensions are allowed?**

To extend a building permit application under review, a written request must be provided to the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Permit Processing Center at (415) 558-6644. Extension fees apply. Only one extension is allowed, allowing for an additional 360 days.

**11. Is it possible to reinstate a cancelled building permit application?**

No, a cancelled building permit application cannot be reinstated. Customers must reapply for a new permit.

**12. How long can an applicant wait to pick up an approved building permit application?**

Permits must be issued within 100 calendar days from the permit approval date. A Notice of Cancellation is mailed alerting the applicant when only 21 days remain to obtain the permit prior to cancellation. A one-time extension of 360 days at any time during the approval procedure may be granted by the Director of the Department of Building Inspection upon written request by the applicant. Payment should also be included with the request. If you need additional information please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Permit Processing Center at (415) 558-6644 for further information.

**13. How long is a building permit valid?**

The duration of a permit depends on the estimated cost of the work to be done. A copy of the fee schedule indicating valuation, fee and time allowed to complete the work is available at the Public Information Counter or by calling the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Services Division at (415) 558-6088.

**14. What can I do if I cannot start work within the required 90 days?**

You need to file for an extension to start work before the end of the 90 days. Submit a request for time extension to start work to the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 or call (415) 558-6570 for further information. Extension fees apply.

**15. Where do I go to file an extension for an issued building permit? How many extensions are allowed and what is the process?**

For active issued building permits, an extension form needs to be submitted to the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 or you may call (415) 558-6570. Extension fees apply. Please bring your building permit and the job card with you.

**16. What time is building construction allowed? Can work be done on weekends?**

Building construction can occur during the hours of 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM, seven days a week, including holidays. Any work done before or after these hours must not exceed the noise level of five decibels at the nearest lot line unless a special permit has been granted to allow this. Five decibels is similar to the sound of a screw gun installing screws in drywall. This is detailed in Police Code Article 29, Sections 2907 and 2908. Construction related noise complaints can be directed to the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services at (415) 558-6570. Construction related complaints beyond the allowed hours should be directed to your local police station.

**17. How can I find out who my district inspector is?**

To find out who your Building, Electrical and Plumbing Inspector is, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services at (415) 558-6570; for Housing Inspector, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement – Housing Inspection Services at (415) 558-6220. You may also stop by the Public Information Counter at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 to request a copy of the district inspector assignment charts or online at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

**18. Does the Department of Building Inspection offer off-hour inspections? What is the fee?**

Yes, we do offer off-hour inspections on active permit application and charge a minimum of two hours. You need to fill out a “Service Request Application” form. For plumbing off-hour inspection request, the form must be accompanied by a typewritten letter in company letterhead stating the reason and when off-hour inspection is needed. If it is for a Homeowner’s permit, a plain typed letter stating the reason and when off-hour inspection is needed. All requests need to be pre-approved and prepaid. The off-hour inspection is done before 7:30 AM or after 4:00 PM during weekdays or during weekend. Submit off-hour inspection request at Inspection Services counter on the 3rd floor at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Under the new fees that took effect on September 2, 2008 on all building permits issued on or after September 2, 2008, the two-hour minimum off-hour inspection fee is \$340.00 (\$170/hour). For further information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services at (415) 558-6570 or visit DBI website at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi)

**19. Where do I pay for a re-inspection fee for plumbing/electrical?**

For Electrical and Plumbing re-inspection fee, you do not need to fill out a new permit application, but do need to pay the fee at the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Central Permit

Bureau. New fees took effect on September 2, 2008 that applies to all building permits issued on or after September 2, 2008. For further information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services at (415) 558-6570 or visit DBI website at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

**20. What is a Special Inspection, and when is one required?**

Special Inspection requirements are found in Sections 1701 to 1704 of the San Francisco Building Code. Special Inspection is the monitoring of the materials and workmanship that are critical to the integrity of the building structure or public safety. On specific project related questions, the project sponsor should contact the engineer or architect on record for information. If you have general code questions, you may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services - Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205. If further clarification is required, the architect or engineer on record may contact the Department of Building Inspection staff indicated on the Special Inspection Form at (415) 558-6132.

**21. Where and when do I obtain a Certificate of Completion and Occupancy for my building?**

A Certificate of Final Completion and Occupancy is issued for any change of building use, new building construction, new additions to existing buildings and the construction of new habitable space in existing buildings. This Certificate is issued by the Building Inspector at the end of the final inspection for that project and may also be signed by a San Francisco Fire Inspector and a Housing Inspector if they were required to provide inspections for that permit. *It is important to remember that this Certificate will always be issued by the Building Inspector.* You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570. Building Inspector office hours are 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

**22. Where do I get a copy of a Certificate of Completion and Occupancy for my home or apartment building?**

You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6080. Fees apply.

**23. How long is a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) valid?**

Expiration date of a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) depends on the remaining work to be done. A TCO is issued when part of a project and all life and safety issues have been completed. A request for a TCO has to be submitted to the Building Inspection Division and must be approved by the Chief Building Inspector. You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570, Fees apply.

**24. What are the notification procedures for issuance of new building permits/alteration permits?**

- For new construction building permits, a 30" x 30" sign is posted on the lot within 24 hours after a building permit is issued new construction. The posted sign displays the permit and appeals information.
- For alteration permits such as structural additions, a letter is sent upon permit issuance to the owners of adjacent properties.
- Upon issuance of a permit to demolish a building, mail notice is sent to owner of all properties

within 300 feet of the building to be demolished.

- There are two types of notifications:
- Notification of filing of the permit application
- Notification of issuance of the permit

**25. What is the process of changing or adding a contractor once the permit has been issued?**

The owner may notify the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Central Permit Bureau, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 or fax (415) 558-6170, stating:

- The building permit application number
- Job address
- A request to remove the former contractor listed on the job, and the effective date (if applicable).
- The name of the new contractor with:
  - A current California State Contractor License number and expiration date;
  - Valid San Francisco Business Tax Registration Certificate number and expiration date;
  - Current California Worker's Compensation Certificate.

**26. What permits are needed when installing fire alarms or fire sprinklers?**

To install fire alarms, a building permit (Form 3/8 – Application for Building Permit Additions, Alterations or Repairs) with two sets of drawings and an electrical permit are required.

To install fire sprinklers, a building permit (Form 3/8 – Application for Building Permit Additions, Alterations or Repairs) with two sets of drawings and a plumbing permit are required. For more information, please call the San Francisco Fire Department at (415) 558-6177.

**27. Do I need a permit for an electrical upgrade?**

You need to file for an Electrical Permit. Homeowners of a single-family detached dwelling may apply for the permit if they are doing the work themselves; otherwise, permits have to be applied for by a Licensed Electrical Contractor. For more information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Electrical Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570.

**28. Do you need to be a licensed plumber/electrician to do repair work?**

For minor plumbing work not requiring cutting into or removal of piping, a permit is not required. You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Plumbing Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570 for more information regarding permit requirements. For electrical work requirements, you may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Electrical Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570.

**29. Where do I submit a Boiler Inspection form?**

You can mail the form to the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Plumbing Inspection Division, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. For further information, please call (415) 558-6570. Application for Permit to Operate Boiler is available at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi) under "Forms and Handouts."

**30. How may I request a refund for my building permit fees in case of error or other special circumstances?**

You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Cashier's Office at 1660 Mission Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103 or call (415) 558-6501.

**31. How do I find out if my neighbors have a permit to perform construction work?**

You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 or track online at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi) to find out if work is approved, issued, and finalized with a valid permit. You will need to provide the Customer Service staff with the correct property address where the work is being performed. If there is no valid a permit, you may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services at (415) 558-6570 to file a complaint.

**32. Who do I contact to file a complaint about illegal construction activity?**

For residential maintenance issues, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement - Housing Inspection Services at (415) 558-6220 or email DBI.HIDComplaints@sfgov.org.

- For plumbing hazards, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Plumbing Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570 or email DBI.PIDComplaints@sfgov.org.
- For electrical hazards, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Electrical Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570 or email DBI.EIDComplaints@sfgov.org.
- For disabled access issues, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Disabled Access Section at (415) 558-6014 or email DBI.DisAccComplaints@sfgov.org.
- For work without permit (such as illegal units) or beyond the scope of permits or other construction related issues, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services -Building Inspection Division at (415) 558-6570 or email DBI.BIDComplaints@sfgov.org.
- When filing a complaint, please provide us with the valid property address and the type of work being done.

**33. Are there any complaints/violations in my apartment building?**

You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 to check if there are any abated and current complaints/violations. For current complaints/violations, you may also track online at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

**34. How do I remove a complaint/violation in my building?**

File for a permit to comply with the Notice of Violation to correct the listed violations and contact the appropriate inspector to schedule inspection of the property.

If you have any questions regarding code requirements, call the Department of Building Inspection, Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.

**35. What is the process to appeal the issuance of a building permit?**

Obtain a copy of both sides of the permit application from the Department of Building Inspection,

Permit Services - Central Permit Bureau, and then file the appeal with the Board of Appeals. You have 15 calendar days from the day of issuance to file an appeal. You need to submit 11 copies of the application including any supporting documents plus a filing fee. Should you need further assistance, please call (415) 575-6880 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/boa>.

**36. Can a permit be appealed after the 15-day notice to appeal has expired?**

You may go to the Board of Appeals and request the Board to take jurisdiction. For further information, please contact their office at (415) 575-6880 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/boa>.

**37. Does the 15-day window to appeal a permit include weekends?**

Appeals to the Board of Appeals must be filed within 15 calendar days of issuance. If the appeal period ends on a weekend or holiday, the last day to file is the next business day. For further information, please contact their office at (415) 575-6880 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/boa>.

**38. How do I find out if the dwelling unit I live in is legal?**

You may submit a request for a permit history on the building. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi). Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance.

**39. Where do I find out who owns the fence? Which side determines ownership, flat side or the support side?**

This is a civil matter and not in the Department of Building Inspection's jurisdiction. The law does not require a fence. A survey may often be required to determine ownership. Survey results should be compared to your property lot-line records on file at the Assessor-Recorder's Office, City Hall, Room 190, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94103, or call (415) 554-5596.

Generally, fence ownership is 50/50 with adjacent neighbors.

A record request can also be made on both adjacent properties to find out if any building permits were filed for building of the fence. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi). Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance.

**40. How high can a fence be and is a permit required?**

In the front – 3 ft, and in the sides and back – 6 ft. Anything higher requires a permit. For more information, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.

**41. How do I find out who owns the retaining wall between my property and my neighbors'?**

You can start by obtaining a permit history of the properties to see if a permit was ever issued for the retaining wall; and if so, under what address was it issued. If a permit was never issued, it becomes a civil matter and you may need to hire a private surveyor to determine ownership. Permit history of a property can be requested by submitting a record request. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi). Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance.

- 42. Who can I speak to regarding mechanical code questions?**  
You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services – Energy/Mechanical Desk at (415) 558-6672.
- 43. Who do I contact regarding commercial and structural residential code questions?**  
You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.
- 44. Who can I speak to regarding California Building Code Title 24 Part 2?**  
You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services – Energy/Mechanical Desk at (415) 558-6672.
- 45. Who can I contact regarding parapets?**  
You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services at (415) 558-6133.
- 46. Who can I speak to regarding disabled accessibility?**  
You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Disabled Access Section at (415) 558-6014.
- 47. Who should I contact regarding the Abatement Appeals Board?**  
You may call the Department of Building Inspection, (415) 558-6088 and ask for the Abatement Appeals Board representative.
- 48. How may I request a physical inspection for Condominium Conversions?**  
Please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Condominium Conversion at (415) 558-6349.
- 49. Who can I speak to regarding water/heat conservation?**  
You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement - Housing Inspection Services at (415) 558-6220.
- 50. How do I find out if my property is located in a “Seismic Hazard Zone”?**  
You may call Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088.
- 51. Who manages residential energy inspections?**  
The Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement - Housing Inspection Services. Please call (415) 558-6220 for further assistance.
- 52. Who do I contact when water is coming from the neighbor’s house into my property?**  
For a residential building, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement - Housing Inspection Services at (415) 558-6220.

For a commercial building, please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services

at (415) 558-6570.

**53. If my house is next to a hill, does it pose a hazard for a landslide?**

You may want to hire a civil, structural or soil engineer to investigate your situation.

**54. How can I request a copy of a section of the Building, Mechanical, Electrical or Plumbing code?**

If you want a copy of a section of the Building, Mechanical, Electrical or Plumbing Code, you may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Plan Review Services - Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.

To purchase a copy of the code, please contact Stacey's Bookstore, 581 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 421-4687 or (800) 926-6511; the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), 5360 South Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601, (800) 284-4406; Builders Booksource, 1817 Fourth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710, (510) 845-6874; American Legal Publishing Corporation, 432 Walnut Street, Suite 1200, Cincinnati, OH 45202, (800) 445-5588.

**55. How can I obtain a copy of Department of Building Inspection's Code Rulings/Administrative Bulletins?**

You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 or visit the Public Information Counter. Administrative Bulletins are also available online at <http://www.sfgov.org/dbi>. If you have questions regarding a Code Ruling or an Administrative Bulletin, contact the Department of Building Inspection, Technical Services Division at (415) 558-6205.

**56. Where can I obtain a copy of the Lead Paint Guidelines?**

Please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 or go to the Public Information Counter. You may also obtain the notice sign and handouts at [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi).

**57. How do I see plans of a major construction project such as major sport stadiums?**

You may submit a record request to the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division to view the plans. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/dbi>. Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance.

**58. How do I find out when my building was built?**

You may submit a Record Request to the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division for a copy of the Certificate of Final Completion and Occupancy of the original new construction permit. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi). Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance. Fees apply.

**59. Where may I request copies of building plans, floor plans, or blueprints?**

You may submit a records request (permit history) at the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit



www.sfgov.org/dbi. Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance. Fees apply.

**60. How may I request a building address change or the addition of a building number to my building?**

Please contact the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Central Permit Bureau at (415) 558-6073. The property owner must leave a voicemail with their contact name and phone number to request an appointment for address change or house number addition. If qualified, a building permit will be necessary. A fee of \$262.00 applies to each request for a building address change or a new building number.

**61. How do I find the block and lot numbers for my property?**

You may call the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division at (415) 558-6088 or contact the Assessor-Recorder's Office at (415) 554-5596 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.

**62. How can I obtain a copy of the Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) checklist?**

You may contact the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - UMB/Parapet Program at (415) 558-6059.

**63. Where do I get information about San Francisco Piers?**

Contact the Port of San Francisco at the Ferry Building, Suite 3100, (415) 274-0400, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfport>.

**64. Who issues elevator permits/inspects elevators?**

Elevator permits are issued by the State of California, Department of Industrial Relations - Elevator, Ride and Tramway Unit. Their office is located at 121 Spear St. Suite 420, San Francisco, CA 94105, or you may call (415) 356-6579 or visit <http://www.dir.ca.gov>.

If the elevator is under construction, the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division would have limited jurisdiction (location of unit, air, American Disability Act shaft walls, etc.)

If the elevator serves a commercial property, the Department of Building Inspection, Inspection Services - Building Inspection Division can investigate complaints for safety reasons and if need be, contact the State of California, Department of Industrial Relations - Elevator, Ride and Tramway Unit, as well as issue a Notice of Violation.

If the elevator is in residential apartments, units and hotels, please call the Department of Building Inspection, Housing Inspection/Code Enforcement - Housing Inspection Services (415) 558-6220.

**65. Do I need a San Francisco business license to do building code work in San Francisco?**

You need a Business Tax Registration Certification number before performing any work in San Francisco. To register, contact the Tax Collector's Office, Taxpayer Assistance, City Hall, Room 140, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 554-4400 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/site/treasurer>.

- 66. Where does one obtain a San Francisco business license?**  
Tax Collector's Office, City Hall, Room 140, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, (415) 554-4400 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/site/treasurer>.
- 67. When and why is an application routed to DPW - Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping (BSM)?**  
Projects that potentially have an impact on the public right of way need to be reviewed by the Bureau of Street Use and Mapping (BSM) of the Department of Public Works. For further information, please call (415) 558-6060, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 68. What type of permits does the DPW - Bureau of Street Use and Mapping issue?**  
Permits to occupy the street during construction ("No Parking" permits); new curb cuts or ramps; scaffolding permits; and sidewalk repair permits. For further information, please call the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping counter at the Department of Building Inspection at (415) 558-6060, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 69. Where can I get a copy of Bureau of Street Use and Mapping's "Blue Book"?**  
You may contact the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping counter at the Department of Building Inspection, the "Blue Book" costs \$5 and must be paid for by check. For further information, please call (415) 558-6060.
- 70. Who issues permits to place tables and chairs on the sidewalk?**  
Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 71. Where do I go to file for sidewalk and/or encroachment permits?**  
Sidewalk repair permits can be filed with the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, please call (415) 558-6060. They are issued by the Department of Building Inspection, Permit Services - Central Permit Bureau at 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6070. Encroachment permits are issued by the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 72. What Department handles private/public trees?**  
The Department of Public Works, Bureau of Urban Forestry. Please call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 from any 415 area code phone or (415) 701-2311 for further information or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfdpw>.
- 73. Who enforces sandblasting? Do I need a permit?**  
The Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810. The Bay Area Air Quality Management Division is also responsible for monitoring sandblasting, asbestos removal and commercial kitchen exhaust output. They are located at 939 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 and may be reached at (415) 771-6000 or visit <http://www.baaqmd.gov>.

- 74. Who do I contact regarding asbestos inspection?**  
SF Department of Public Health - Environmental Health Division, 1390 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 252-3951, <http://www.sfdph.org>. The Bay Area Air Quality Management Division is also responsible for monitoring sandblasting, asbestos removal and commercial kitchen exhaust output. They are located at 939 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 and may be reached at (415) 771-6000 or visit <http://www.baaqmd.gov>.
- 75. Where do you make a complaint regarding garbage/debris on the street or sidewalk?**  
Department of Public Works, Street Environmental Services. Please call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 from any 415 area code phone or (415) 701-2311 for further information.
- 76. How do I file a complaint regarding a broken sewer line?**  
Please call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 from any 415 area code phone or (415) 701-2311 for further information.
- 77. Where do I inquire regarding sidewalk repair/curb cut?**  
Contact the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street and Mapping at (415) 558-6060, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 78. Who issues permits for portable toilets on the street?**  
Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 79. Where do I inquire regarding underground tank removal?**  
Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 80. Where do I inquire regarding the Condominium Conversion process?**  
Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, Room 460, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 81. Who do I contact regarding street paving?**  
Contact the Department of Public Works, (415) 554-4004, 30 Van Ness Avenue, 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94102 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
- 82. Where do I inquire about graffiti removal?**  
Please call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 3-1-1 from any 415 area code phone or (415) 701-2311 for further information.
- 83. What Department do I contact regarding an easement between properties?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.

- 84. Where do I inquire regarding property liens?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 85. Where can one obtain a copy of a property line window agreement on an apartment building?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 86. Where do I go to record ownership or record the grant deed of my property?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 87. How do I check the number of rooms on a single-family dwelling or apartment building?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 88. Where do I get a marriage license and/or other recorded documents?**  
Assessor-Recorder's Office, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 190, San Francisco, CA 94102-4698, or call (415) 554-4176 or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 89. Where do I get birth and death certificates?**  
You may obtain birth and death certificates at the Department of Public Health, located at 101 Grove St. (near Polk St), San Francisco, CA 94102, or visit <http://www.sfdph.org>. Their phone number is (415) 554-2700.
- 90. Who issues permits for entertainment?**  
San Francisco Police Department, 850 Bryant Street, Room 458, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 553-1115.
- 91. Where do I go to get a street vendor's permit?**  
San Francisco Police Department, Permit Bureau, 850 Bryant Street, Room 458, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 553-1115. For more information about how to start a business for street vendors, please visit [http://www.sfgov.org/site/sf311\\_index.asp?id=55828](http://www.sfgov.org/site/sf311_index.asp?id=55828) or call the San Francisco Customer Service Center at 311 from any 415 area code telephone number or (415) 701-2311 from outside San Francisco.
- 92. Where can I obtain a residential guidelines packet?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 93. Where can I get copies of the Zoning Regulation?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.

- 94. Who can I talk to regarding Landmark/Historical buildings?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, Ca 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 95. Where can I obtain a conditional use permit?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 96. Where can I get information regarding discretionary review?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 97. Where do I inquire regarding my property line?**  
Please submit a records request (permit history) at the Department of Building Inspection, Customer Service Division. The Record Request form can be found at the Public Information Counter or visit [www.sfgov.org/dbi](http://www.sfgov.org/dbi). Please call (415) 558-6080 for any records assistance.
- 98. Where do I inquire regarding zoning restrictions?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 99. Where do I go to purchase maps (zoning, seismic, aerial, etc.)?**  
Please contact the Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
- 100. Who is responsible for a lot division?**  
Several departments manage lot divisions.
- 1) Planning Department, 1660 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 558-6377, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>.
  - 2) Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, 875 Stevenson Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 554-5810, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/sfdpw>.
  - 3) Assessor-Recorder's Office, City Hall, Room 190, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 554-5507, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/assessor>.
- 101. Who do I contact regarding toxic waste materials?**  
Contact the Department of Public Health, (415) 252-3800, 1390 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102 or visit <http://www.sfdph.org>.
- 102. Where do I go to complaint/inquire regarding my rent and/or being evicted?**  
Rent Stabilization Board, 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 320, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 252-4600, (415) 252-4602, or visit <http://www.sfgov.org/rentboard>.

Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, 427 South Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 703-8644, or visit [www.hrcsf.org](http://www.hrcsf.org) .

**103. Where is the tenant's union located to inquire regarding tenants rights?**

The tenant's union is located at 558 Capp Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 282-6622. You may also contact St. Peter's Housing, 474 Valencia Street , Suite 156, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 487-9203, or the Housing Rights Committee, 427 South Van Ness Avenues, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 703-8644.

**104. Where does one obtain a copy of the ordinance for fire sprinklers?**

San Francisco Fire Department is responsible for the ordinance for fire sprinklers, please contact (415) 558-6177 for more information.

**105. What is the School District (SFUSD) fee?**

The School District fee is based on habitable square footage being added or converted. You may contact the San Francisco Unified School District, 1550 Bryant Street, Suite 739, San Francisco, CA 94102 or please call (415) 241-6090 for further information.

**106. What is a TIDF?**

Transit Impact Development Fee. This fee is based on the square footage of commercial space being developed. You may call (415) 554-3160 or the Public Utilities Commission Manager's office at (415) 554-7311 for further information.

**107. Where do I inquire regarding out-of-order street lights or street lighting?**

Department of Electricity and Communications, 901 Rankin Street, San Francisco, CA 94124 or please call (415) 495-4490.

**108. Where can I obtain a list of building, plumbing and electrical contractors?**

Contractors State License Board at 1-(800) 321-CSLB or [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov), or by calling the State Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 952-5210.

**109. Who do I contact to check if a contractor is licensed?**

Contractors State License Board at 1-(800) 321-CSLB or [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov).

**110. Where can I file a complaint against a contractor?**

Contractors State License Board at 1-(800) 321-CSLB or [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov), or by calling the State Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 952-5210.

**111. Where can I take the test to become a licensed contractor?**

Contractors State Licensing Board at 1-(800) 321-CSLB or [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov), or call the State Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 952-5210.

**112. What department do I contact to become a licensed contractor?**

Contractors State License Board, 301 Junipero Serra Boulevard, Suite 206, San Francisco, CA 94127, (800)-321-CSLB, or visit [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov).

**113. What Department issues permits for residential parking? (2 hrs. parking)**

Contact Residential Parking Permits Department, 1 South Van Ness Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 701-4500, or visit <http://www.sfmta.com>.

**114. Where do I go to obtain Residential/Commercial contractors parking permit stickers?**

You may go to the Department of Parking and Traffic at 27 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 554-5000, or visit <http://www.sfmta.com> for further information.

**115. Who can I speak to regarding reinstalling parking meters?**

You may call the Department of Parking and Traffic at 27 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 554-5000, or visit <http://www.sfmta.com> for further information.



Department of Building Inspection  
1660 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103-2414



Want a DBI Pro to brief your community / organization on permits and inspection issues? Please contact us at 415-558-6089 or DBICommunityOutreach@sfgov.org and we will make it happen.