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## Commercial Permitting Information

**If you want to construct a commercial building in Chambers County there are three main steps:**

- Project Review
- Obtain Permit
- Obtain Certificate of Compliance

### **1. Who needs a permit?**

Chambers County requires permits for commercial construction or substantial improvement taking place in Chambers County. Public buildings, commercial establishments, and multi-family dwellings of four or more units must be reviewed, meet fire code requirements and other County regulations, and obtain a Certificate of Compliance when complete (before being occupied).

**NOTE:**

The Cities of Anahuac, Beach City, Baytown, and Mont Belvieu issue permits directly. However, the County reviews projects for compliance with County codes and regulations within Anahuac, Beach City, Cove, and Old River-Winfree.

### **2. How do I obtain a permit?**

- Call the permit office at 409-267-2700.
- You will need to schedule a meeting with the Development Review Committee (DRC). The DRC will require specific information regarding your project (see item 3 below). A meeting with the DRC is a mandatory part of the commercial permitting process.
- You will need to download a “Commercial Permit Application” from the Environmental Health & Permitting webpage as well as a “Commercial Application” from the Road & Bridge webpage, which can also be accessed on the county website. Applications may also be obtained in person from the permitting office.
- Present the completed application along with appropriate fee to the permitting office.

**NOTE:** If you start construction without a permit, the Fire Code enforcement process will begin. This may include the issuance of a Notice of Violation, Stop Work Order, and/or Citation per County Fire Code.

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### **3. Requirements and Information needed to obtain a permit:**

#### **Fire Marshall's Office (fire code plans review)\*:**

- (a) An overall site plan of the project, with fire lanes and access roads identified;
- (b) A floor plan and construction documents for proposed permanent buildings (if applicable) indicating:
  - (1) the types of construction materials and class of interior finish;
  - (2) the location of all exits with distances between exits called out – exit width, type and any special requirement shall be stated; and
  - (3) the location of any fire alarm equipment (**separate permitting**), automatic sprinklers (**separate permitting**), emergency lighting, etc. required to meet this Code.
- (c) Lockboxes required for NEW businesses, gated communities, gated apartment complexes or any property secured with a fence or gate.

#### **\*NOTE: Your plans are required to be sealed/stamped by an engineer if one of the below applies to your project (Texas Engineering Practice Act § 1001.056):**

- 1. Building with more than one story;
- 2. Apartment or condo that is 4 or more units;
- 3. Building over 5,000 sq ft in area;
- 4. Building with a span (unsupported run) greater than 24 ft.
- 5. Private buildings for farm or ranch use are not required to be sealed/stamped.

#### **Engineering Department:**

- 1. Public Infrastructure Design Standards must be followed;
- 2. Drainage Criteria Manual must be followed;
- 3. All commercial properties will have to have a drainage plan prepared by a Registered Engineer;
- 4. Follow the Chambers County Culvert Policy – Driveways, etc.;
- 5. If located in Trinity Bay Conservation District's (TBCD,) service area (water, sewer, and drainage), their guidelines must be followed; and
- 6. If you have to have easements or roadways to gain access to the property, a Subdivision Plat must be filed and any access/roads must be built to County Road Standards.

#### **Environmental Health Department:**

- 1. If a city or TBCD is to provide water and sewage, approval must be obtained from them;
- 2. If a septic system will have to be installed, a design of the system must be reviewed by the Environmental Health Department (409-267-2700).
- 3. Environmental Health also reviews compliance with food service standards.
- 4. Environmental Health will review floodplain compliance.

If unable to determine from the information submitted whether a permit should be issued, the DRC may require the submission of additional information, drawings, specifications or documents.

**NOTE:** Once your permit is obtained, you need to notify the permitting office when you begin construction. If you begin construction without a permit, the Fire Code enforcement process will begin.

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#### **4. What Fire Codes and Building Codes does Chambers County follow?**

- Chambers County Fire Code
- International Fire Code 2009
- International Building Code 2009
- NFPA 1194 (RV Parks)

#### **5. Additional information for RV Parks**

- NFPA 1194 is the applicable standard;
- Electrical installations must follow current NFPA 70 (NEC) standards;
- Roadways must have a fire lane to be marked and be a minimum of 20' in width and capable of supporting fire-fighting apparatus;
- Dead end roads in excess of 150' require a turnaround;
- Roadways must be able to support firefighting apparatus (at least 75,000lbs);
- Permanent structures and site buildings are required to have marked fire lanes.
- Each RV/camping unit site must be identified by numbers easily read from street;
- Individual sites must be at least 10' from other sites or structures;
- Each site stand for RV/camping must be at least 8' wide and constructed of material which prevents low spots and ruts;
- Each RV/camping unit site must have enough room to park a full-size car or pickup (off the roadway). Parking areas must be constructed of materials which prevent low spots and ruts.
- If RV Park to be situated in a flood zone, ask Permitting department about further requirements.

#### **6. What do I do when my construction or substantial improvement is complete?**

- Local Government Code Ch. 233.064(i) states that a building may not be occupied before a Certificate of Compliance is issued by the County. This means you need to obtain this certificate **BEFORE** you open the establishment for business;
- There are cases when the County may grant a Conditional or "Temporary" Certificate. For instance, a project built in phases;
- To obtain a Certificate of Compliance, Complete a "Request for Final Inspection Form". This form must be stamped and signed by a licensed engineer.
- Submit the form to the Fire Marshal's Office; and
- An inspection will be scheduled to inspect your property for compliance with County codes and regulations, and issue a Certificate of Compliance.

**NOTE:** No person shall occupy a public building, a commercial establishment, or a multifamily residential dwelling consisting of four or more units that the Fire Code Official determines, after inspection, not to be in compliance with this Code unless and until a Certificate of Compliance is subsequently issued for such building, establishment or dwelling. Violation of this provision will initiate the enforcement process.

( c ) Review of subdivision or development plans. Persons proposing residential subdivisions, manufactured housing communities, multi-unit residential developments, business parks, or other similar structures that use OSSFs for sewage disposal shall submit planning materials for these developments to the permitting authority and receive approval prior to submitting an OSSF application.

(1) The planning materials must be prepared by a professional engineer or professional sanitarian and must include:

- (A) an overall site plan;
- (B) a topographic map;
- (C) a 100-year floodplain map;
- (D) a soil survey;
- (E) the locations of water wells;
- (F) the location of easements, as identified in 285.91(10) of this title (relating to Tables);
- (G) a comprehensive drainage plan;
- (H) a complete report detailing the types of OSSFs to be considered and their compatibility with area-wide drainage and groundwater;

## 7. Questions?

Chambers County Engineer	409-267-8379	<a href="mailto:bhall@co.chambers.tx.us">bhall@co.chambers.tx.us</a>
Chambers County Environmental Health & Permitting	409-267-2700	<a href="mailto:rtunze@co.chambers.tx.us">rtunze@co.chambers.tx.us</a>
Chambers County Fire Marshal	409-267-2445	<a href="mailto:firemarshal@co.chambers.tx.us">firemarshal@co.chambers.tx.us</a>
City of Anahuac	409-267-6681	
City of Baytown	281-420-5394	<a href="mailto:planning@baytown.org">planning@baytown.org</a>
City of Beach City	281-383-3180	
City of Mont Belvieu	281-385-0023	