



Fire Code Review, Permit, and Inspection Steps

There are 3 main overall steps to constructing commercial or public projects in Chambers County:

1. Application/Project Review
2. Obtain Permit
3. Final Inspections/Obtain Certificate of Compliance

What types of projects need permits, reviews, and/or inspections?

- Any new construction, including buildings and structures, regardless of the size;
- Any addition to a building or structure, or adjacent to a building or structure;
- Remodeling of a building (substantial improvement) if the cost exceeds 50% of the overall value of the existing building;
- Remodeling of a building or office if interior walls are changed, exits are modified, or exit pathways are modified in any manner;
- Change of ownership, tenant, use or occupancy of a building;
- Fire alarm, fire sprinkler, fire suppression systems, and vent hood suppression systems;
- Flammable or combustible fuel storage tanks;
- Access control systems;
- Emergency responder radio coverage systems;
- High piled storage;
- Hazmat storage;

How do I obtain a permit or review?

1. Submit construction application and plans via the online portal at www.mygovernmentonline.org. Upload your construction plans to the portal, including adequate details and information, so that your project may be reviewed.
2. Your project must be reviewed for Health/Environmental, Drainage, and Fire Code;
3. Once approvals are complete, and appropriate fees have been paid, the permit will be issued and may be downloaded via the permitting portal. Fees may be paid online with credit card or in-person at the Permit Office, 201 Airport Road, Anahuac, TX 77514.
4. Please do not start construction before the permit is issued! Permits must be issued prior to beginning construction per County Fire Code and Local Government Code Ch. 233. Breaking ground, adding construction materials to property, or moving buildings onto property constitute beginning construction.
5. Commercial projects must be inspected by the Fire Marshal and issued a Certificate of Compliance upon completion, BEFORE the building is occupied.

Required Inspection Steps:

Inspections must be conducted, according to fire code, during the phase of a project. Not all elements will apply to every project, depending upon the specific project's complexity.

1. Fire Walls, Fire Barriers, or Fire Rated Partitions must be inspected before cover-up;
2. Underground fire lines must be inspected and hydro-test witnessed prior to cover-up;

3. Aboveground fire sprinkler piping must be inspected and hydro-test witnessed prior to cover-up;
4. Kitchen vent hood suppression systems must be inspected and tested;
5. Fire alarms must be inspected and tested when installation is complete;
6. Fire sprinkler systems must be tested (flow switch) and head placement verified when installation is complete;
7. Any other specialized fire protection systems must be inspected and test witnessed;
8. Flammable or combustible liquid storage tanks must be inspected before cover-up, including witnessing pressure test;
9. Fuel station pumps must be tested for emergency shut-off;
10. FINAL, overall, inspection when project is completed and ready to be occupied.

Required Documentation to Close-Out a Project and Issue a CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE:

1. Passing fire marshal inspection reports for the inspections listed in the previous section. Not all inspections may apply to every project. However, EVERY project must have a final inspection;
2. Aboveground Test Certification documentation (Fire Sprinkler System) provided by installer;
3. Underground Test Certification documentation (Underground Fire Line) provided by contractor;
4. Installation Certificate for the Fire Alarm System (FML009A) provided by contractor;
5. Kitchen Hood Suppression Installation Certificate (FML010) provided by contractor;
6. Request for Final Inspection/As-Built Form stamped by the architect/engineer for the project;
7. Certificate of Compliance (issued by fire marshal). **NOTE:** It is possible to issue a conditional (temporary) certificate if the project is substantially complete and can be safely occupied prior to ultimate completion.

Compliance with other Regulations and State Laws

Please note that this document is intended to be a brief guide. Other County departments, such as Environmental Protection, require passing inspections for septic installations and food service applications. These items must be reviewed and permitted as well, as indicated earlier in this document. In addition, various state laws govern all projects, including, but not limited to, the requirements for certain projects to be designed by an architect or engineer per Texas Engineering Practice Act § 1001.056 and Occupations Code §1051.703:

Engineer required if:

- Single-story apartment building over 8 units;
- Apartment building that exceeds 4 units AND exceeds 2 stories;
- Any building over 5,000 square feet in area;
- Any building with an unsupported span greater than 24 ft.

Architect required if:

- Institutional or residential facility;
- Publicly owned building of Education, Assembly or **Office Occupancy** and construction cost exceeding \$100,000.00;
- Publicly owned *existing* building of education, assembly or **office occupancy** and alterations exceeding \$50,000.00 and requiring moving of walls, or alteration of an exit.