

City of Palo Alto Development Center

Permitting – A PAFD Introduction



Paul Johnson,
Hazardous Materials
Inspector

Permits - The Basics

Why Permits:

- Safety (individual and community)
- Quality of Life



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The Development Center

City of Palo Alto "One Stop Permit Shop"

- Planning
- Building Dept. (includes building, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, structural)
- Public Works
- Utilities
- Fire Dept
(includes fire prevention & haz mat)



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The Development Center

- Location: 285 Hamilton Ave. Palo Alto (first floor)
- Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm
except Wednesday 9:00am – 4:00pm
- Phone: (650) 329-2496
- Web site: www.cityofpaloalto.org
(featured sites "Development Center")
- Services Offered:
 - Construction Permits
 - Temporary Use Permits
 - Certificate of Occupancy
(required for all commercial buildings)
 - Other



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When do you need a permit?

Typical permits or approvals:

- **Planning Dept:**
 - Business Locations (zoning), modifications outside of a building, temporary use events, etc.
- **Building Dept:**
 - New construction, tenant improvements, demolition, etc.
 - Equipment installations:
 - does not plug in (i.e., hard wired) – electrical permit
 - has exhaust ducting, process pipe - mechanical permit
 - has plumbing - plumbing permit, water quality dept.
 - stores, uses or handles hazardous materials – fire / haz mat permit



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When do you need a permit?

Typical permits or approvals (cont'd)

- **Public Works:** Encroachment and street work permits, flood zone issues / requirements.
- **Utilities:** Approves and processes requests for services and meters installations as a result of new construction, addition or remodel of a building within the limits of the city.
- **Fire:**
 - Most plan checks under a building dept. permit.
 - Some fire permits are stand alone permits, issued out of the Fire Dept. Administrative Office at 250 Hamilton Ave. Palo Alto
(temporary use permits, fire sprinkler & alarm permits, haz mat closures, haz mat otherwise modify permits, etc.)



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Permit / Plan Checks

At the counter (walk in service)

- The building technician will guide you through the process.
 - Answer questions.
 - Provide pre-submittal guidance.
 - Have different depts. assist at the counter regarding their departments requirements, etc..
 - Take in submittals ready for plan check. (i.e., process the paper work, collect plan check fees, etc..)

Note: Preplanning / pre-submittal meetings can be scheduled or for shorter meetings done over the counter.



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Permit / Plan Checks

Submittals for Construction Plan Checks:

- General: A "Submittal" may be made by anyone. A "Permit" is issued only to the Owner (i.e. building owner) or contractor.
- At the time of submittal the building technician will determine what permits are needed.
 - For commercial projects a "Hazardous Materials Disclosure" form will need to be filled out the counter or must be provided with the project package.
- The technician will also determine if the project qualifies for:
 - 1) Over the counter plan check (less than 20 minutes) or
 - 2) Standard plan check.
- Any project that needs Planning Dept. approval will take longer (on the front end and before it can go to the building dept.)



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Permit / Plan Checks

Plan Check (after any Planning Dept approvals):

- A) Over the Counter – 20 minute estimated plan check time.*
- B) Typical Projects – 4 week project plan check time.**
- C) Larger projects – at time of submittal plan check time will be determined and may be up to 8 weeks.

Note:

* Structural calculation reviews are not done over the counter.

** A) The Building Dept. allows for outside plan checks to shorten their plan check duration. There are additional costs associated with this service.

B) Fire Department Plan check times have been formally set at 40 days for the current fiscal year.

Plan Check Status can be obtained via the internet at development center web site (click on "Permit Status").



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Permit / Plan Checks

Plan check completion and Permit:

- After the plans have been approved by all required Depts. A technician will notify the individual listed on the Plan Check Application that the plan check is complete and may come in and pick up the package / permit.
- Upon pick up the Building Permit will be issued. The permit and job copy of the plans are to be maintained on the site. The permit is the "job card" which will be signed off by each dept. as they are called for inspections. When each dept. final the job card, a "final" Building Dept inspection is scheduled.

The building dept cannot final the project unless all other required departments have finalized their part first.



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Permit / Plan Checks

Typical problems:

- A) The location (zoning) is inappropriate for the type of business.
- B) The building is inappropriate for the type of business (i.e., a high hazard "H" occupancy business cannot conduct business in a building designed for a "B" or office type building).
- C) Incomplete Permit package submittals.
 - I) Title 24 Accessibility requirements: If the project is over \$95 K "Title 24 Accessibility" requirements apply (Need to be shown, proving compliance or added to the project). (State law)
 - II) Occupancy Classification hazardous materials list:
If a facility has hazardous materials, a building occupancy classification form or hazardous materials list must be included.
 - III) For Haz Mat Projects: See the Guidelines at www.pafd.org



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Hazardous Materials Facilities

PAMC 17 (Fire Dept. Permits)

- (PAMC 17.12.020) No person shall construct or install a new storage facility until a permit or approval has been issued.
- (PAMC 17.32.010) Additional approvals shall be obtained for a storage facility thereafter connected, installed, constructed, repaired as required by Section 17.12.060, substantially modified, replaced, closed, removed, or for any change in or addition to haz. mat. stored not in accordance with the prior approval
- (PAMC 12.040) No storage facility shall be abandoned.



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Hazardous Materials Facilities

2001 California Fire Code (Fire Dept. Permits)

- (2001CFC 105) A permit constitutes permission to maintain store, use or handle materials, or to conduct processes which produce conditions hazardous to life and property, or to install equipment used in connection with such activities.
- (2001CFC 105) To store, transport on site, dispense, use or handle hazardous materials in excess of Table 105-C or to install, repair, abandon, remove, place temporarily out of service, close or substantially modify a storage facility or other area regulated by Article 80....



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Do I need a permit?

When in doubt – ask !
(We want to help but it's your
responsibility and your liability)

City of Palo Alto Development Center
(650) 329-2496

Fire Dept Administrative Office
(650) 329-2184



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