CITY OF
PALO ALTO

Planning & Development Services

Accela Citizen Access User Guide

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INTRODUCTION

What is ACA/OPS?

Accela Citizen Access (ACA) is the City of Palo Alto's Online Permitting Services portal (OPS). The ACA Portal allows residents, businesses, and visitors to submit permit requests for Planning, Building, Public Works, and Fire permits, access permit records, pay permit fees, check on the status of in-progress records, and schedule building inspections.

The City has moved to an all-digital application and plan review platform. This means that we no longer accept paper plan submittals. All applications must be submitted through ACA. Any person who submits a permit application must register for an ACA account with a valid email address registered with our system.

Applicants should expect project communication from City staff via email. At various stages in the permitting process, the applicant is directed via email to log in to their ACA account to complete the next step (e.g., retrieve plan review comments, make a payment, access issued/approved documents).

Accela Citizen Access (ACA) / Online Permitting Services (OPS) Portal: https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO

Please note: You can search for property records, view zoning and parcel data, and schedule inspections without creating an account.

Browser Compatibility

The latest versions of the following browsers are recommended for the ACA Portal:

• Microsoft Edge

• Mozilla Firefox

• Google Chrome

• Safari

The portal may not function properly if using other browsers.

REGISTER FOR AN ACCOUNT

1. Open your web browser and go to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/. When the webpage loads, click on Register for an Account at the top-right of the window or the Create an Account link located beneath the sign in button.
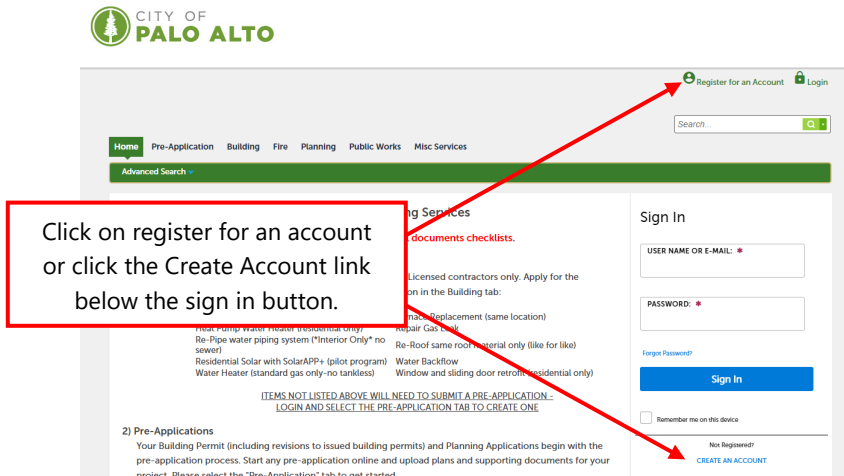
2. Enter your desired credentials and take note of your security question and answer, read and agree to the terms of service, then click continue.
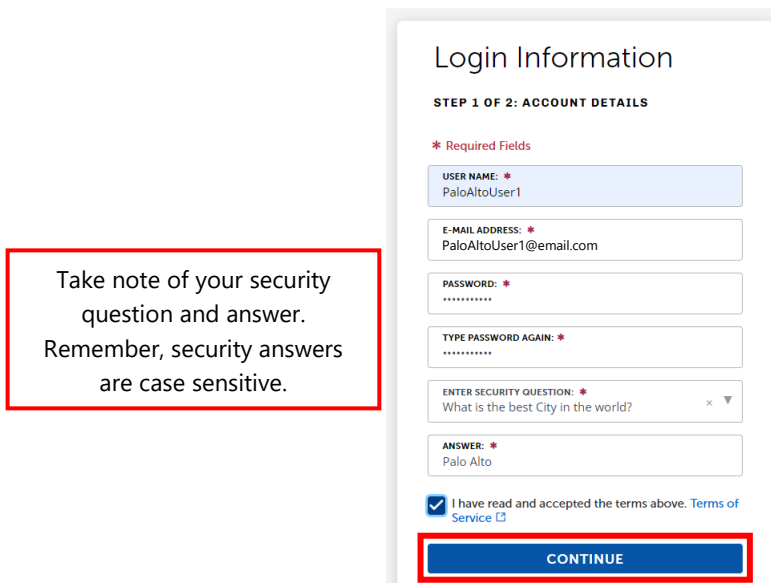
3. Enter your contact information for the selected contact type, then click submit.

Complete the contact details for your selected contact type. You only need to complete the required fields as indicated by the "*".

4. You will receive confirmation that your account was created successfully. However, registration is not yet complete.

5. Finally, an account verification email will be sent to the address on record. Click on the link to verify your account and you will then be able to submit Building, Fire, and Public Works permits and Planning Entitlement applications. If you do not see this email in your inbox, check your spam folder.

Click here to verify your account.

Login

After you have set up your Citizen Access account, log in to access your records or to apply for permits.

1. Open your internet browser and navigate to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/
2. Enter the username or email address and your password used to create your account. Click the "Sign In" button to continue.
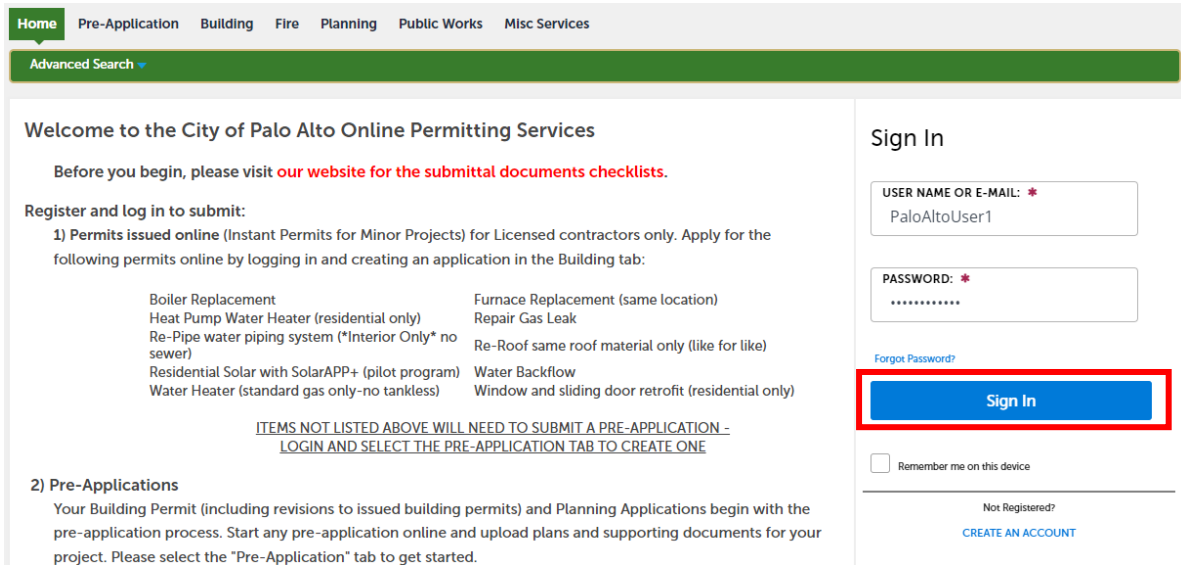
Having trouble logging in?

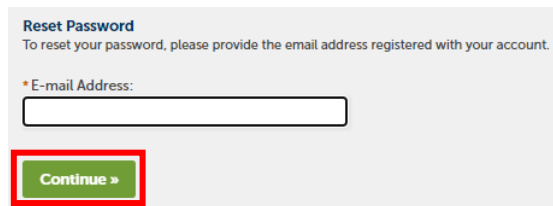If you have problems logging in to a newly created account, have been locked out after too many attempts, or have other issues gaining access, send an email to PDSData@CityofPaloAlto.org. Staff members will help troubleshoot and provide guidance. If staff is unavailable or if you are experiencing issues outside of business hours, try clearing your web browser's cache and browsing history before trying to log in again.
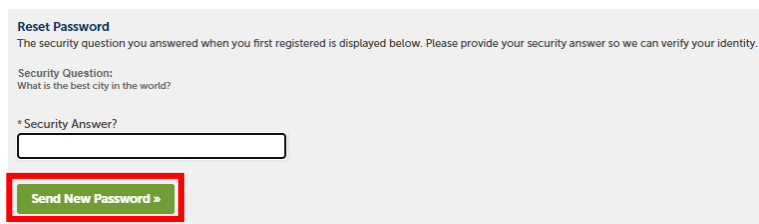
Reset your Password

1. If you forget your password, click on the "Forgot Password?" link located under the login fields.
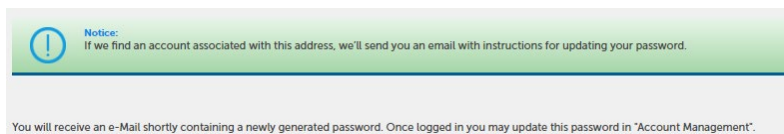
Sign In

USER NAME OR E-MAIL: *
PaloAltoUser

PASSWORD: *
....

Forgot Password?

Sign In

☐ Remember me on this device

If you're having trouble with your password and need a reset, click on the "Forgot Password?" link.
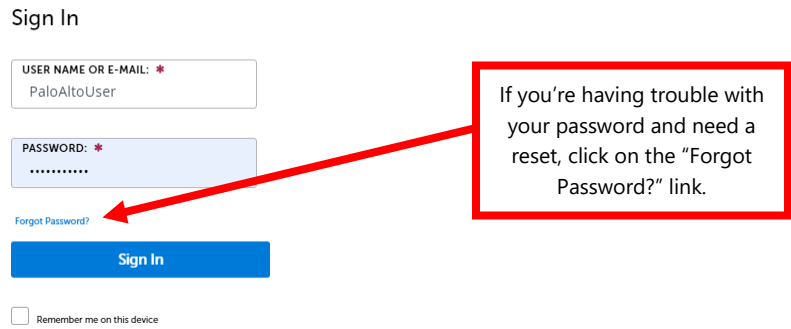
2. Enter the e-mail address tied to your account, then click "Continue".

Reset Password
To reset your password, please provide the email address registered with your account.

* E-mail Address:

Continue »

3. After your email address is entered, you be prompted to answer the security question you selected at account creation. Provide your security answer, then click the "Send New Password" button.

Reset Password
The security question you answered when you first registered is displayed below. Please provide your security answer so we can verify your identity.

Security Question:
What is the best city in the world?

* Security Answer?

Send New Password »

4. You will receive a notification that explains that if the details provided match an existing account, an email will be sent to the address you provided along with the username on your account and a temporary password.

ⓘ **Notice:**
If we find an account associated with this address, we'll send you an email with instructions for updating your password.

You will receive an e-Mail shortly containing a newly generated password. Once logged in you may update this password in "Account Management".

Please note: This temporary password is only valid for 24-hours. If you do not see the email, please check your email spam/junk folder (if you still do not find it, send an email to PDSData@CityofPaloAlto.org).

5. Log in to your ACA account with your temporary password.

Sign In

Enter Username
or Email Address.

USER NAME OR E-MAIL: *
PaloAltoUser

Enter temporary
password.

PASSWORD: *
....

Forgot Password?

Sign In

☐ Remember me on this device

6. At this point, you will receive a notification that your temporary password has expired and will be prompted to select a new password. Where the system asks for the "old" password, enter the temporary password provided. Remember that passwords are case sensitive. When complete, click submit.

An error has occurred.
Your password has expired and must be changed in order to proceed. For more information about a secure password, please contact your agency administrator.

Change Password

*User Name:
PaloAltoUser1

*Old Password:

*New Password:

*Confirm Password:

Submit »

7. After you enter your new password and click submit, you will be brought to the ACA Portal home page. You have successfully updated your password and gained access to your account.

PERMIT SEARCH

Searches can be completed by record number, address, parcel number, or date range. To search with OR without logging into an ACA account, open your internet browser and navigate to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/.

Note: If you are not logged in, most searches will yield limited permit types and permit details. If you are looking to view your project details, download or upload files, and more you must be logged in to your account. This level of detail may only be available to accounts tied to a permit.

1. There are four places where you can search for records on the homepage.
   a. The first general search field is located at the top right-hand side of the page.
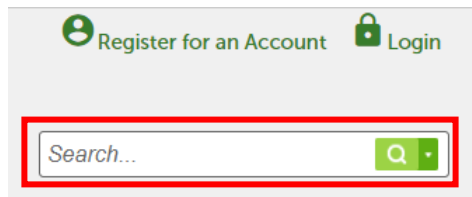
   b. The second is an Advanced Search function on the upper left of the Home screen.
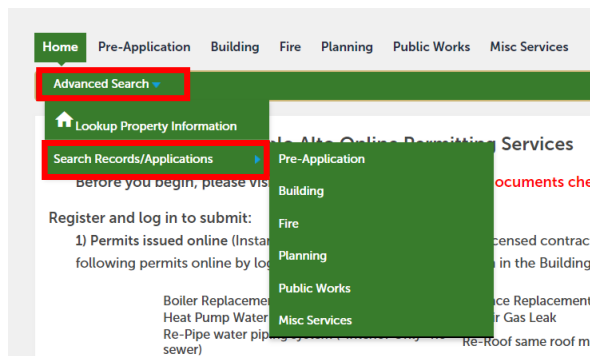
   c. Third, you can also scroll down to use the provided search functions for Pre-Applications, Building, Planning, Fire, Public Works and Miscellaneous Services.
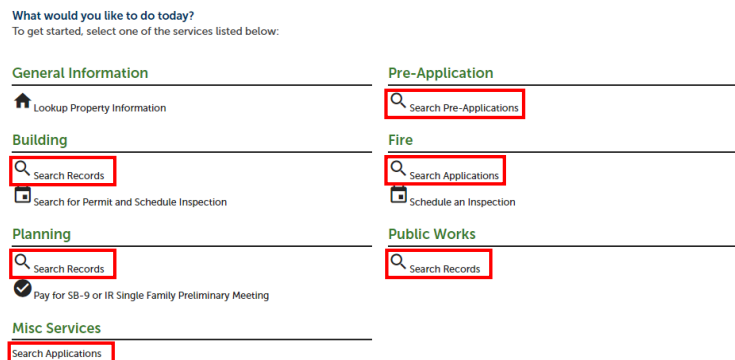
d. Finally, if you are the applicant on a record, you can also utilize the "My Records" section of the portal to locate any open permits tied to your account. Click on "My Records" from the "Home" page to view your permits.
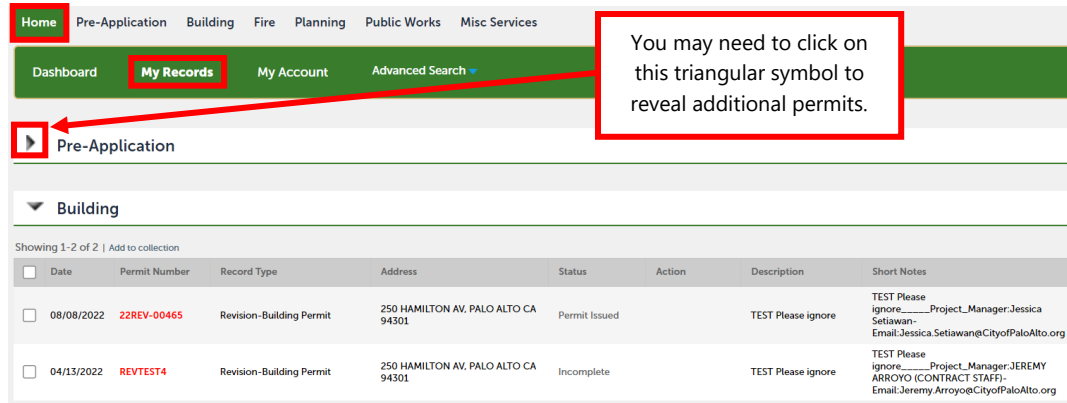
2. Enter your search criteria and click the "Search" button. Please note: By default, the search function time frame is ten years.

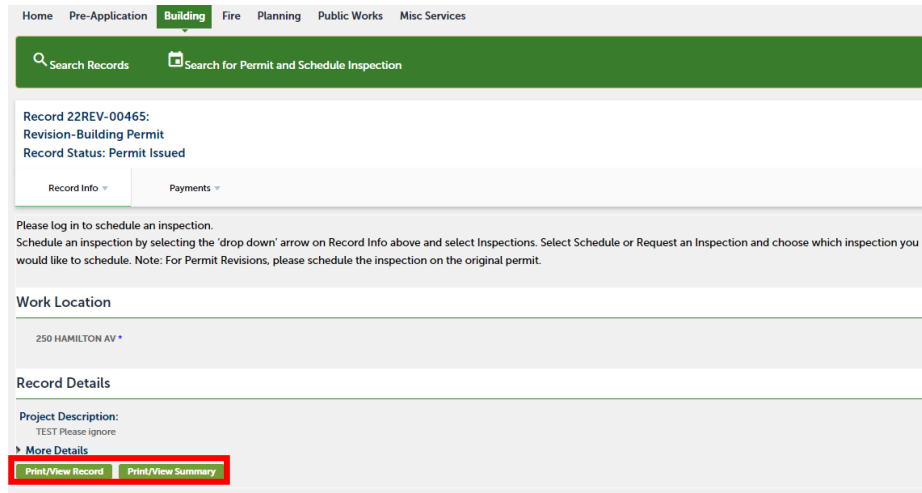3. View the permit record information by clicking on the red record identification number from under the Permit Number category.

4. The record page will load. From here, you can view basic information, like project description, parcel information, or print/view a permit card.

5. For additional actions and information, click on the "Record Info" button to reveal a drop-down menu. You can check processing status, view and navigate to related records, view documents and file attachments to the record, or schedule inspections from this menu.
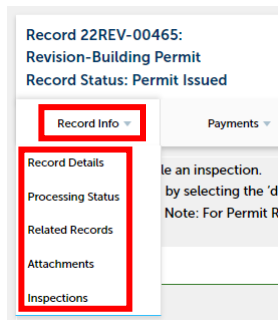
Helpful Search Tips

1. When searching for specific parcel numbers, the format should be "123-45-678".
2. When searching for an address, enter the street number and a partial street name (e.g., Hamilton should be searched as Ham or Hamil).

CHECKING RECORD STATUS

To view the processing status for a permit, you must be logged in with an account linked to the permit. If your account is not linked to the permit and you cannot view the permit details, please send an email request to buildingpermits@cityofpaloalto.org, please allow for 24 business hours to receive a response.

1. Visit https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/ and login to your ACA account.


2. Click on "My Records".
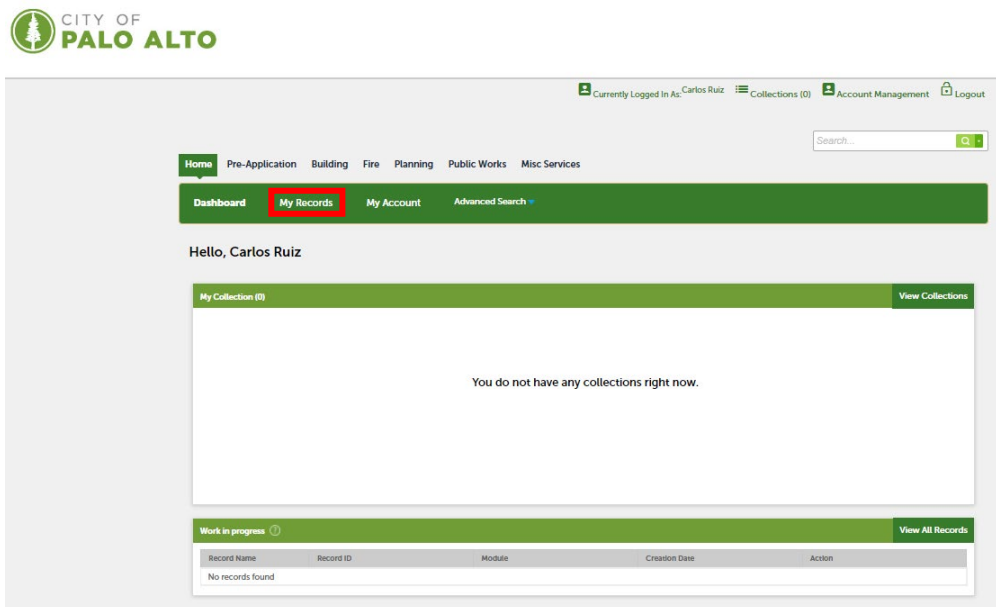
3. If you do not see the record you are looking for, after the "My Records" page loads, be sure to click on the triangle next to permit type (i.e., Pre-Application, Building, Planning, etc.) to reveal a drop-down list of permits tied to your account.

To find your permit, you may have to click on the arrowhead symbol to reveal your record type.
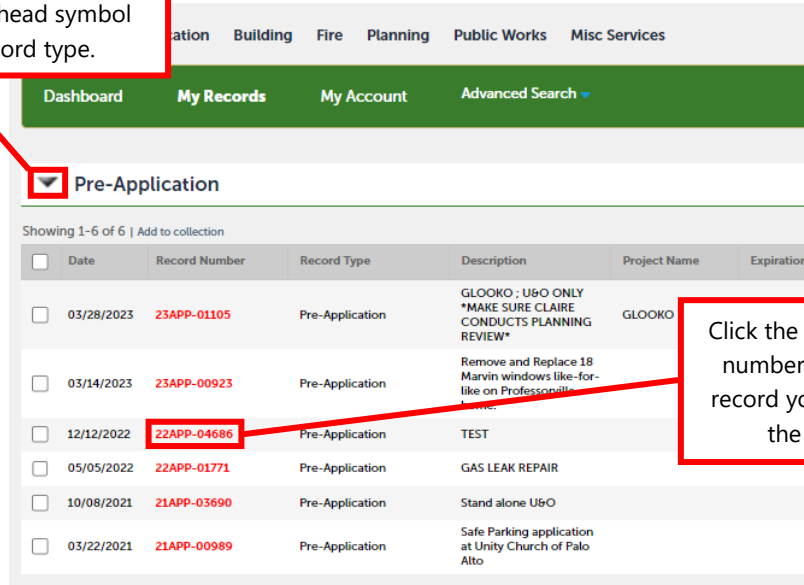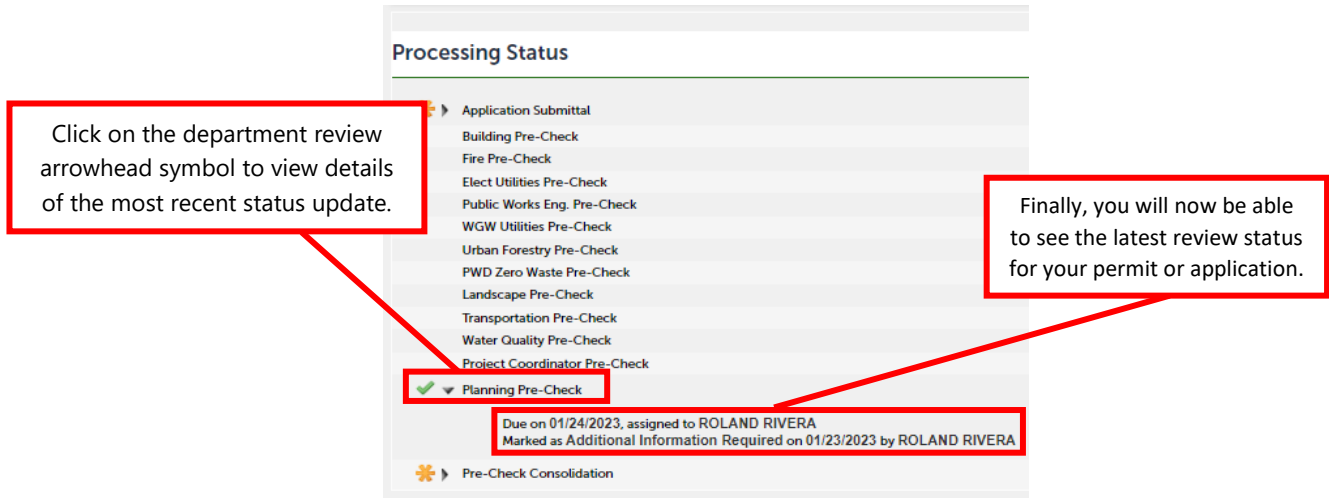
Click the red application number of the permit record you wish to view the status of.

4. When the record webpage loads, click on the "Record Info" button, which will reveal a drop-down menu, then click on "Processing Status".
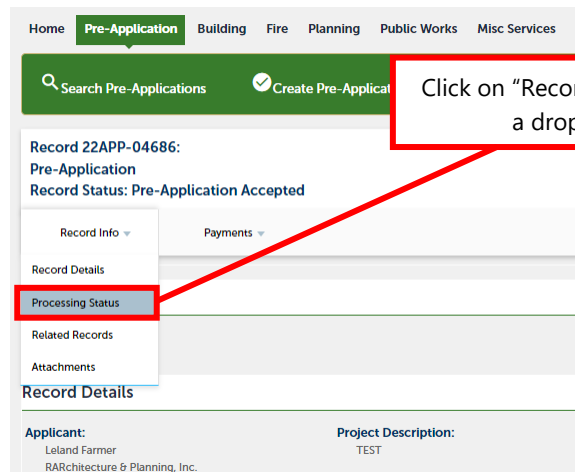
Click on "Record Info", this will reveal a drop-down menu.

5. From here, click on the triangular symbol next to the department name to see the view due dates or to view the latest status update for that particular review task.

Processing Status

Click on the department review arrowhead symbol to view details of the most recent status update.

Finally, you will now be able to see the latest review status for your permit or application.

Application Submittal
Building Pre-Check
Fire Pre-Check
Elect Utilities Pre-Check
Public Works Eng. Pre-Check
WGW Utilities Pre-Check
Urban Forestry Pre-Check
PWD Zero Waste Pre-Check
Landscape Pre-Check
Transportation Pre-Check
Water Quality Pre-Check
Project Coordinator Pre-Check
Planning Pre-Check
    Due on 01/24/2023, assigned to ROLAND RIVERA
    Marked as Additional Information Required on 01/23/2023 by ROLAND RIVERA
Pre-Check Consolidation

Please note: See "Marked as" and dates for latest status of a task. Comments are placed here for the customer to clarify current status.

Linking Permit Records to your ACA Account

Your ACA account must be linked to a specific record for you to view the full details and have access to certain actions (i.e., uploading or downloading documents, email notifications, etc.). If someone else submitted your permit application on your behalf, then it is likely that your account is not linked to the record. To link your account to the record, send a request with the record identification number and the email address associated with your account to PDSData@CityofPaloAlto.org. City staff will contact you after reviewing your request to let you know the record has been connected or if additional information is needed to complete the request.

MY RECORDS AND MY COLLECTIONS

After logging in to your account, you will have the options shown above. To get to all your records and transactions, select either: "My Records" or "My Collections". Each of these are specific to the account holders' records with the City of Palo Alto. A summary of these functions is as follows:

> • **My Records**: A compilation of all records across all modules (Planning, Building, or Engineering) that your Citizen Access account is linked to.

> • **My Collections**: A functionality that allows you to consolidate related records into groups for easier tracking of all the records required to complete a project.

My Records

1. Open your internet browser and navigate to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/. Then log into your account.
2. Once logged in, you will be brought to the homepage. To view all your linked permit records without creating a collection, click on the "My Records" button located on the green bar.
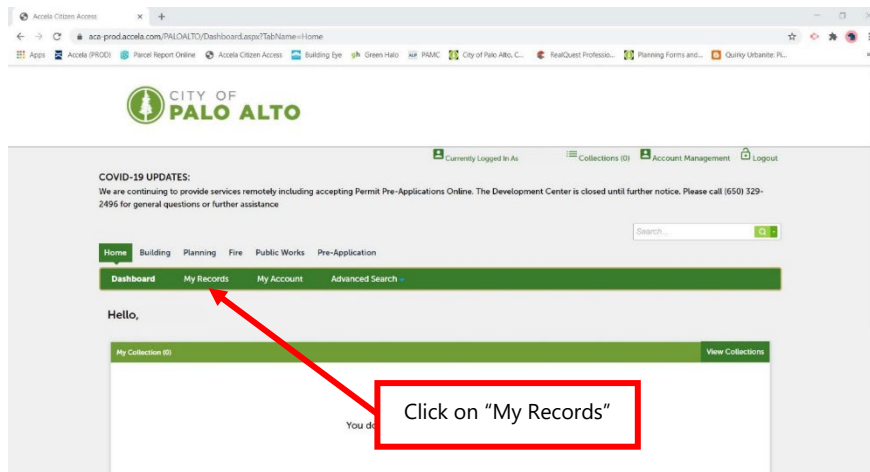
3. Click on the permit type for the record that you have open with the city (i.e. Building for Building Permits, Planning for Planning Entitlements, etc) to reveal any existing records associated with your account.
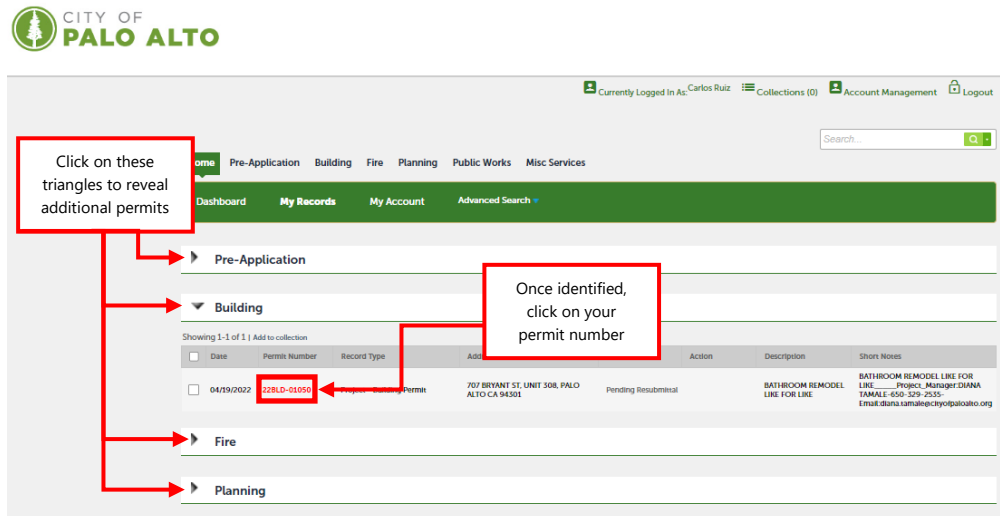
3. You can click on the red record identification numbers to navigate to specific record pages to view record specific information, including record details, documents/attachments, processing status, pay fees, or view parcel information.
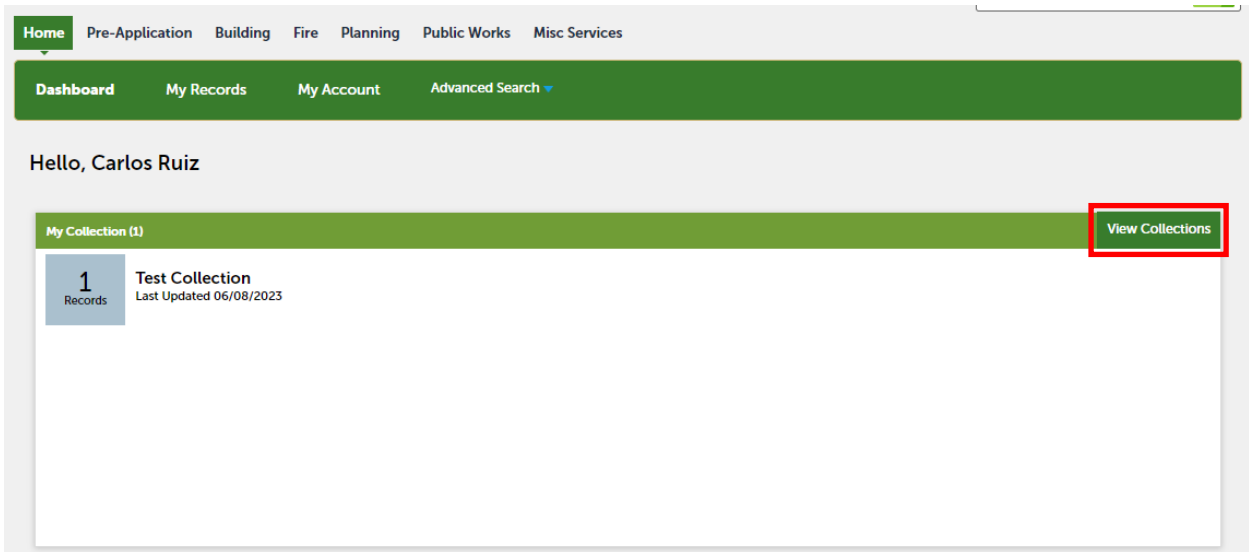
My Collections

1. From the "My Records" page, click on the check boxes next to the records that you wish to compile into a "Collection". Then click on the "Add to Collection" link.
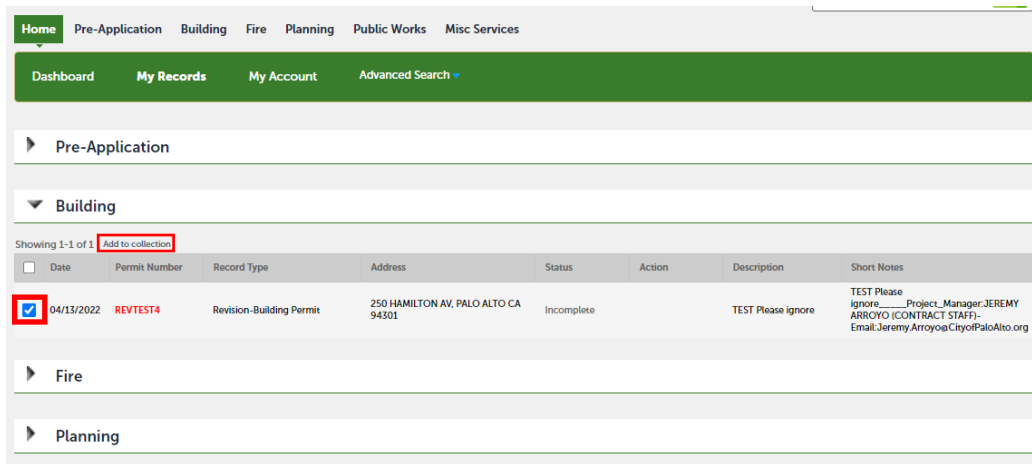
2. A small pop-up window will appear that will include fields for you to name the new collection and provide a brief description. Once complete, click "Add".
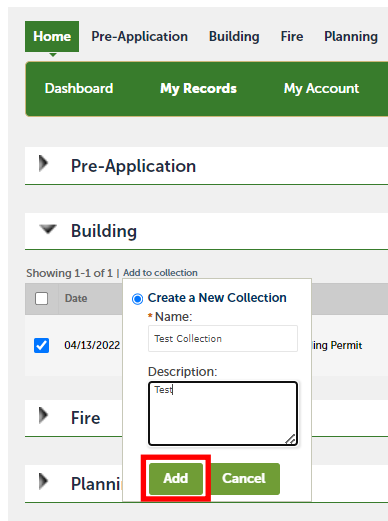
3. To view this new collection, click on the "Dashboard" button located on the green bar. When the page loads, click on "View Collections" located on the right side of the window.

4. To view your collection after the collection page has loaded, click on the name of the collection you created.

5. Your collection will now appear.
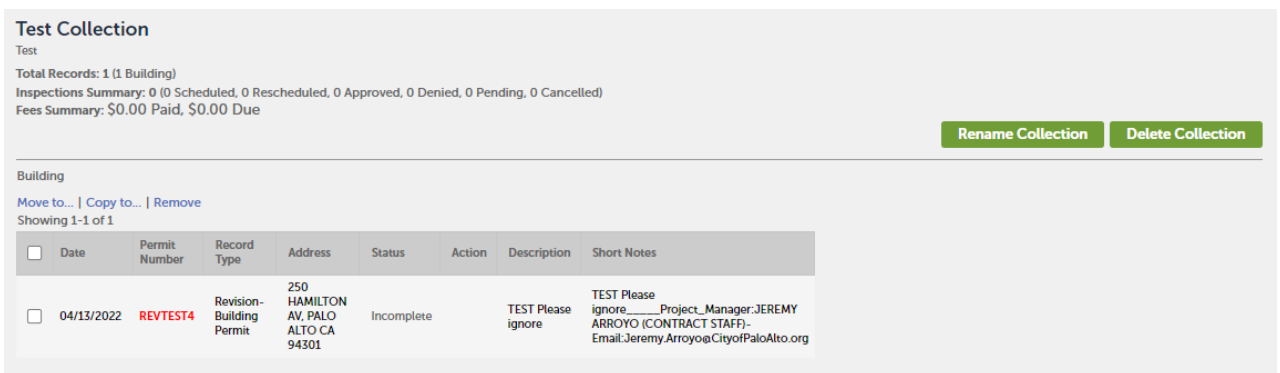
Adding a Record to an Existing Collection

1. To add a record to an existing collection, go back to your "My Records" page, then click on the checkbox for the record you wish to add. Then click "Add to collection" located just under the dropdown header.
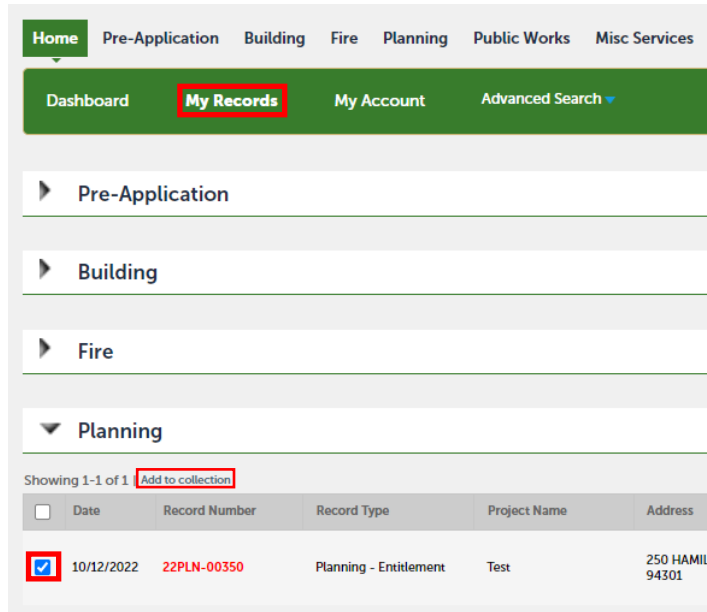
2. A pop-up window will appear. Be sure to select "Add to Existing Collection", select the appropriate collection in the dropdown, and then click the "Add" button.
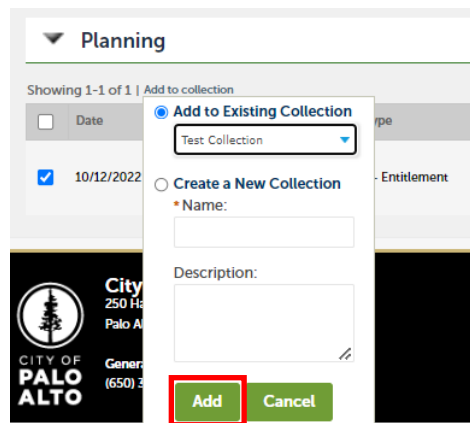
3. You will receive a small notification that reads "Your selection has been added to the collection".
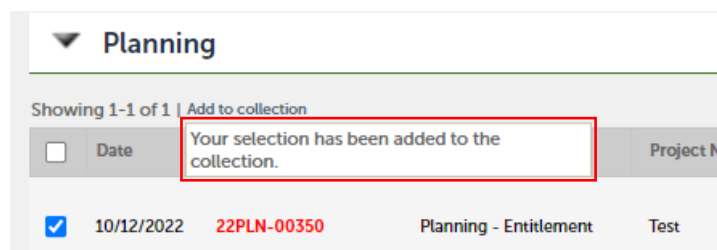
RESUBMIT PLANS & UPLOAD DOCUMENTS

If an applicant already has a project in process and needs to resubmit plans/documents, the resubmittal will need to be made through the ACA portal. This record must be connected to the applicant's user account before any files and corrections can be resubmitted.

Your ACA account must be linked to your record before you can resubmit documents. If someone else submitted your permit application on your behalf, then it is likely that your account is not linked to the record. To link your account to the record, send a request with the record identification number and the email address associated with your account to PDSData@CityofPaloAlto.org. City staff will contact you after reviewing your request to let you know the record has been connected or if additional information is needed to complete the request.

Once the record is linked with a Citizen Access account, the resubmittal process is as follows:

1. Go to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/Default.aspx, then enter your credentials and log into your ACA account:
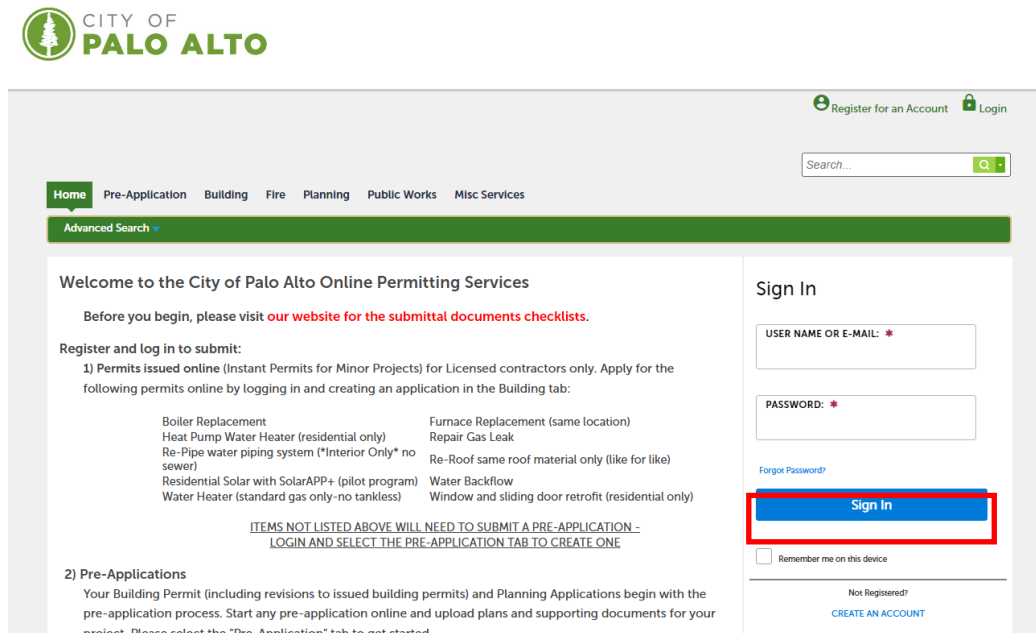
2. Once you login, click on "My Records":

3. When the webpage loads, find your existing record in the respective section. By default, different permit types are minimized, click on the triangular symbol to reveal additional permits tied to your account:

4. After the webpage loads, click on "Record Info" then click on "Attachments":
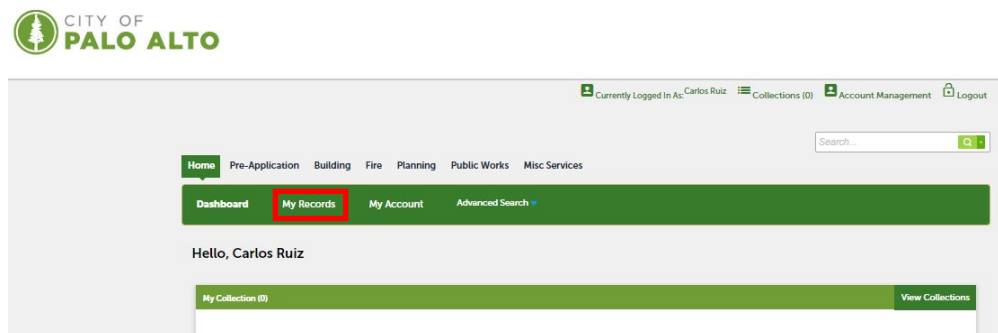
5. When the "Attachments" webpage loads, find the document that needs to be resubmitted. This is usually the document noted in the filename on the left side that reads "…Reviewed – Corrections-Required.pdf" and will have a red "Resubmit" link under "Action" on the right side. To find this link with more ease, be sure to sort documents by clicking "Latest Update", this may take 2 clicks to bring the document to the top of the list (Please note: When resubmitting **DO NOT** upload documents using the Add button):

6. Click the red resubmit link and a pop-up window should appear for you to select your document. Once you find your document, click on it and then click "Open". Be sure to select all of the files you need to resubmit (usually plans and a reply file):

7. Wait for the file to upload 100% on the upload status bar, then select the file type in the "Type" drop down menu. Add a brief description of the file in the "Description" text box. If you need to add an additional document, click "Add" (next to "Save") and proceed with the same steps as the previous file. When you are all complete, be sure to click "Save":

8. And that's all! After clicking save, a new webpage will load and you will receive confirmation that the upload was successful at the top of the screen. Thank you for using the Palo Alto OPS system!

Document Uploads

In some instances, you may be asked to upload a document outside of a formal review period. Examples of this include requested documents in the pre-application phase or additional requested materials during a review period.

NOTE: The "Add" button should only be used in the pre-application phase or if specifically requested to do so. If your existing project is currently under review and a document upload is required, contact your project coordinator to enable the ability to upload documents while under review.

1. To upload a document into an existing record, follow steps 1 though 4. Rather than looking for and using the resubmit link, you will utilize the "Add" button.
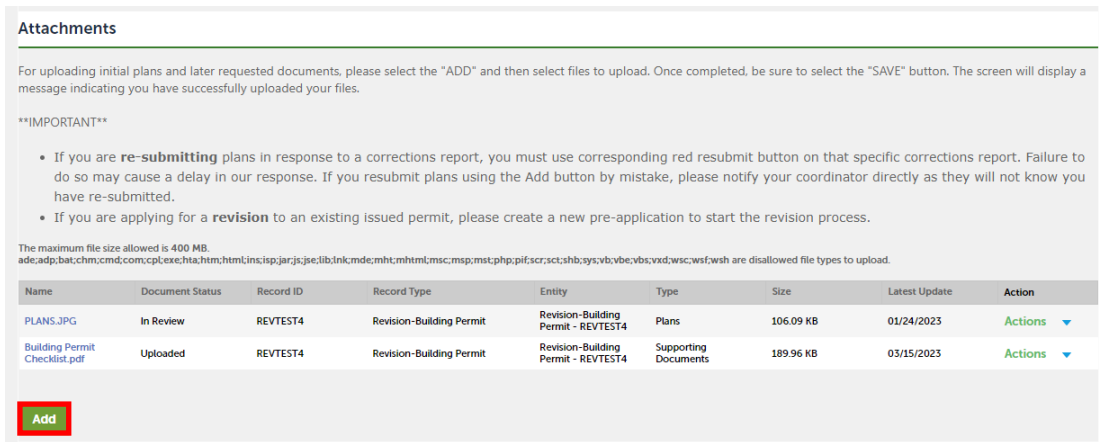
2. A pop-up window will appear, click on the "Add" button on this pop-up and a file selection window will appear. Select the file you wish to upload, then click "Open".
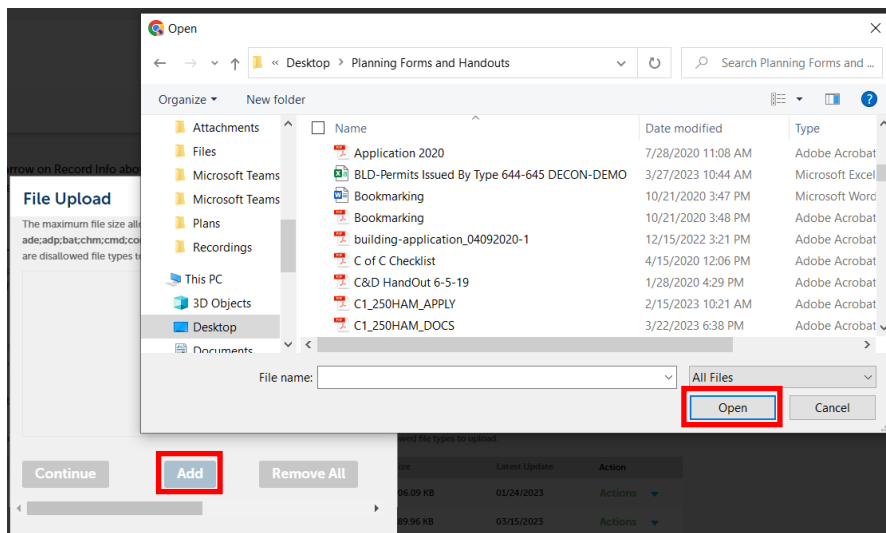
3. The pop-up window will not display the upload status of the file, wait until it reaches 100%, then you can click "Continue".
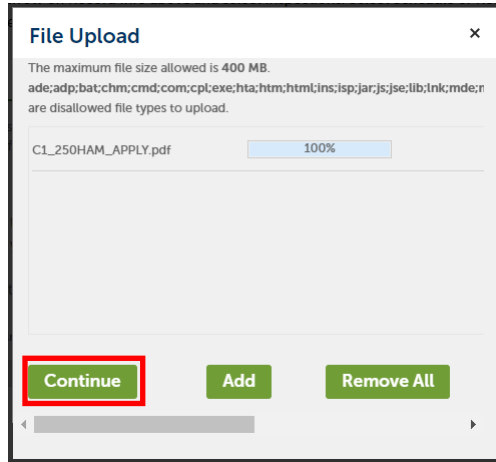
4. Select the document type and provide a document description. Once complete, click "Save".
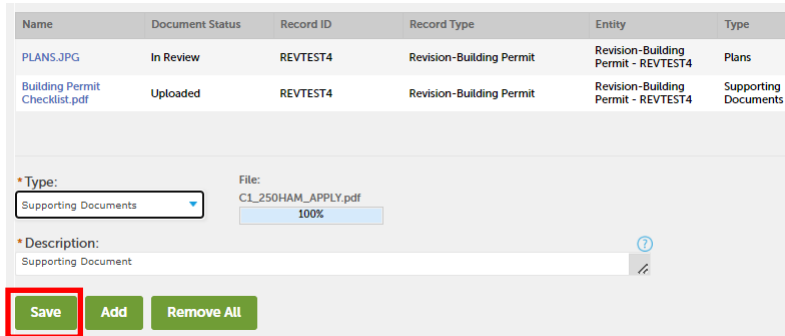
5. Finally, you will receive a confirmation message that your file has been successfully uploaded.
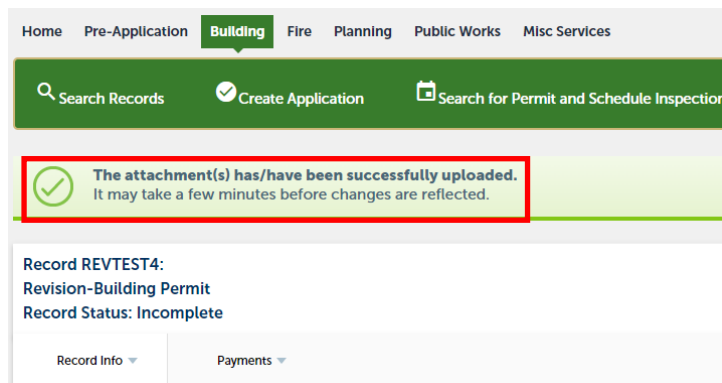
SCHEDULE INSPECTIONS

1. To schedule an inspection without logging into an account, open your internet browser and navigate to https://aca-prod.accela.com/PALOALTO/.

2. Scroll down and utilize one of the "Schedule an Inspection" buttons for the permit types shown below.

What would you like to do today?
To get started, select one of the services listed below:

General Information

🏠 Lookup Property Information

Building

🔍 Search Records

📅 Search for Permit and Schedule Inspection

Planning

🔍 Search Records

✔ Pay for SB-9 or IR Single Family Preliminary Meeting

Misc Services

Search Applications

Pre-Application

🔍 Search Pre-Applications

Fire

🔍 Search Applications

📅 Schedule an Inspection

Public Works

🔍 Search Records

3. You will be brought to a general search page for the record type that you want to schedule an inspection for. Enter the record identification number, then click "Search".

Enter the record identification/permit number, then click "Search".

General Search

Record Number: test-fdp   Record Type: --Select--

Project Name:

Start Date: 06/10/2013   End Date: 06/08/2023

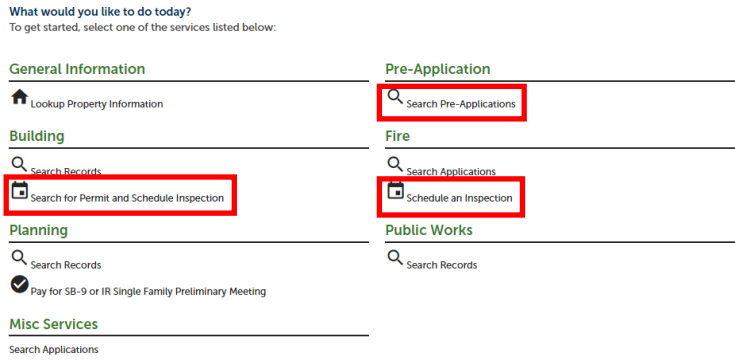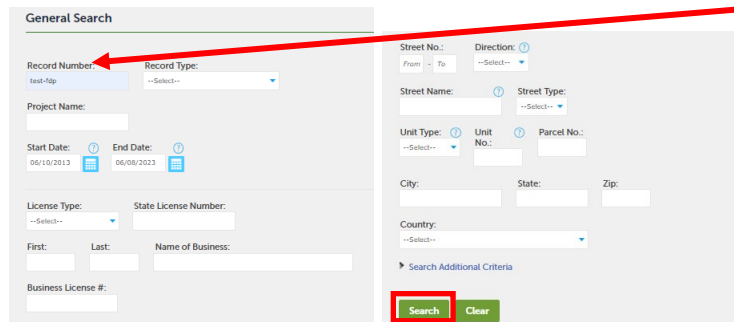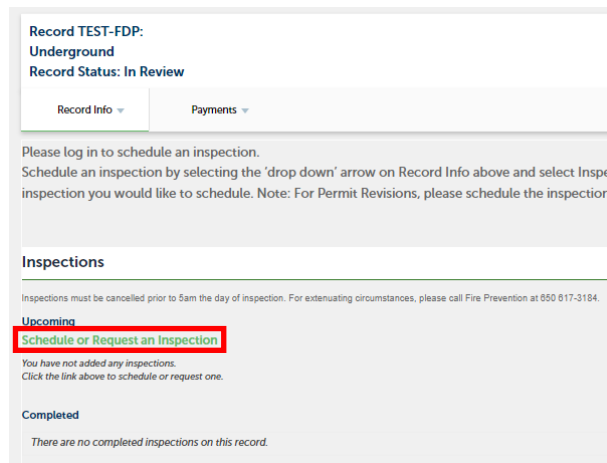License Type: --Select--   State License Number:

First: Last: Name of Business:

Business License #:

Street No.: From - To   Direction: --Select--

Street Name: Street Type: --Select--

Unit Type: --Select--   Unit No.:   Parcel No.:

City: State: Zip:

Country: --Select--

▶ Search Additional Criteria

Search   Clear

4. Once the record page loads, click on the green "Schedule or Request an Inspection" link.

Record TEST-FDP:
Underground
Record Status: In Review

Record Info ▼   Payments ▼

Please log in to schedule an inspection.
Schedule an inspection by selecting the 'drop down' arrow on Record Info above and select Inspec...
inspection you would like to schedule. Note: For Permit Revisions, please schedule the inspection c...

Inspections

Inspections must be cancelled prior to 5am the day of inspection. For extenuating circumstances, please call Fire Prevention at 650 617-3184.

Upcoming

Schedule or Request an Inspection

You have not added any inspections.
Click the link above to schedule or request one.

Completed

There are no completed inspections on this record.

5. When the pop-up window appears, select the inspection type that you want to schedule, then click "Continue".
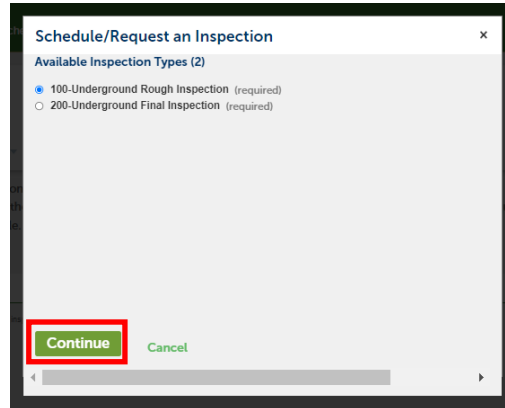
6. Verify the contact information for the inspection, you may select a new contact from the drop-down list or add a new contact by filling out the required fields. When complete, click continue.
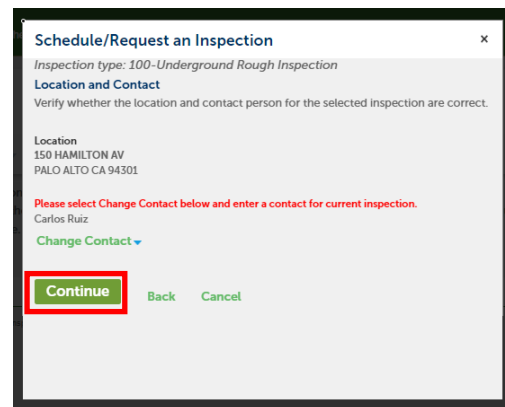
7. Depending on the record type, you may have to type in the desired date and time for the inspection or select the date and time from a calendar. When complete, scroll down and click "Finish".

8. You can confirm that the inspection has been scheduled by visiting the record page.
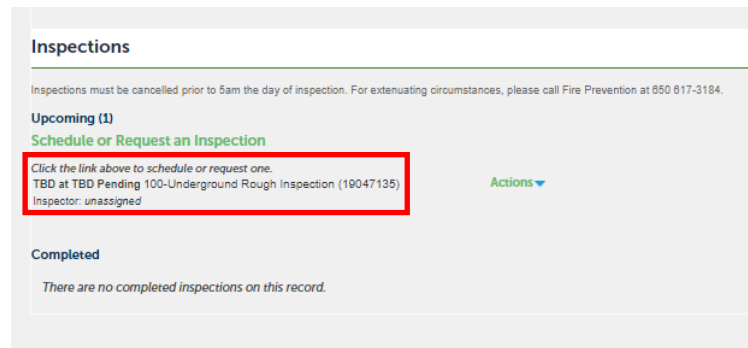
If you are unable to schedule an inspection online, you can schedule inspections in two additional ways.

1. Call 650-329-2496 and press option 2 to schedule through a staff member.
2. Customers can also download the City of Palo Alto's iRequest app. The Palo Alto Inspection Request app for iOS (Apple) or Android can be downloaded from the Apple App store or Google Play store to your mobile device (search for Palo Alto iRequest).