Step by Step Guide to Fire Safety

A word from Robert W. Healy, Cambridge City Manager
The City of Cambridge is dedicated to maintaining its competitiveness and desirability as the place to live, work, and do business. Cambridge's continual growth and development depend, in part, upon the quality and timeliness of the information and services delivered by the City. This pamphlet has been prepared to assist residents, businesses, and developers in moving through the City's regulatory processes as easily as possible, by removing unnecessary confusion, delays, and costs. This pamphlet is one in a series, and is part of the City's ongoing effort to sustain livable neighborhoods and a positive business climate.
Robert W. Healy,
City Manager

This brochure explains who needs a fire safety permit and how to obtain one. Please read this entire document before applying for a fire safety-related permit.

Who needs a Fire Safety Permit?
The provision of Massachusetts General Laws chapter 148 on Fire Prevention and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations 527 CMR require compliance from anyone seeking to:

- maintain, store, or handle materials which produce conditions hazardous to life or property,
- conduct processes which produce conditions hazardous to life or property, or
- install equipment used in connection with such activities.
- If unsure concerning permit requirements, contact the Cambridge Fire Department's Bureau of Fire Prevention.

What activities require a permit?

- Bonfires and the Burning of Christmas Trees (527 CMR 10.23)
- Bowling Establishments (527 CMR 10.15)
- Cannon Firing (527 CMR 22.03)
- Cellulose Nitrate Film (527 CMR 10.27)
- Seasonal Decorations (527 CMR 21.02)
- Combustible Fibers, Storage (527 CMR 28.03)
- CNG (527 CMR 26.08)
- Covered Mall Buildings (527 CMR 10.26)
- Crop Ripening or Color Process (527 CMR 35.03)
- Rubbish Containers (527 CMR 34.03)
- Explosion Hazards, Dust (527 CMR 10.16)
- Blasting (527 CMR 13.03)
- Explosives, Storage and Use (527 CMR 13.04)
- Fireworks, Certificates of Competency and Permits for Supervised Displays of (527 CMR 2.04)
- Oil Burning Equipment, Fuel Storage (527 CMR 4.03)
- Fuel Transfer and Delivery Operations (527 CMR 5.08)
- Fumigation and Thermal Insecticidal Fogging (527 CMR 10.06)
- Hazardous Materials, Public and Private Property (527 CMR 25.08)

- Theatrical Special Effects or Pyrotechnics Display Before a Proximate Audience (527 CMR 2.09)
- Lumber and Other Forest Products (527 CMR 17.00)
- Matches (527 CMR 10.18)
- Open Air Fires (527 CMR 10.22)
- Ovens and Furnaces (527 CMR 10.19)
- Paint Removal, Use of Torches and Heat Producing Devices (527 CMR 10.24)
- LPG, Installation of (527 CMR 6.08)
- Christmas Trees, Keeping and Storing (527 CMR 21.02)
- Material Storage (527 CMR 10.03)
- Tank Truck Permits (527 CMR 8.04)
- Aboveground Storage Tanks Greater Than 10,000 Gallons Capacity and Tanks Storing Combustible Liquids (527 CMR 9.03)
- Tire Rebuilding Plants (527 CMR 10.21)
- Burning Cutting and Welding (CMR 39.04)
- Explosives, Use of A&B (527 CMR 13.04)
- Fire Protection Equipment and Fire Alarm Warning Systems (527 CMR 1.06, 24.00-27.00)
- Flammable Fluids, Solids or Gases, Storage (527 CMR 14.03-15.04)
- Fuel Storage, Oil Burner (527 CMR 4.02(2)[B])
- Propane Gas, Storage & Use (527 CMR 6.08; 9.00)
- Salamanders (527 CMR 20.01)
- Storage, Combustible Material (527 CMR 10.03)
- Tank Installation (527 CMR 9.05)
- Tank Truck Inspections (527 CMR 8.03)
- Tar Kettles (527 CMR 10.03)

What may be required to obtain permits?

One or more of the following may be required when requesting permits:

- ❑ Affidavit
- ❑ Bi-directional Amplifier Radio Plans
- ❑ Bond
- ❑ Certificate of Competency
- ❑ Certification Certificate
- ❑ Contractor's License
- ❑ Copy of applicable license
- ❑ Documented reference verification on any appeals
- ❑ Fire Protection Narrative describing design rationale and interfaces
- ❑ Flame-retardant Certificates
- ❑ Flammable fuel storage information for annual permits
- ❑ Form required by State Fire Marshall for submission to Fire Department
- ❑ Impairment plan
- ❑ Legends on plans
- ❑ Performance test form
- ❑ Plans and/or sketches describing project with required stamps
- ❑ Signed letter on company stationary for performance reports
- ❑ System test reports
- ❑ Tank Application and Permit
- ❑ Waivers

Who issues the fire safety related permits?
The Cambridge Fire Department Headquarters issues all of the above permits. A license from the City's License Commission may be required for activities related to Flammable, Liquids, Solids, and Gases, and for LP-Gas. Contact information for these City departments is located at the end of the brochure.

Fire Protection Equipment (527 CMR 1.06; M.G.L. c. 148, § 27A)
A written permit must be obtained from the Fire Department before a person is allowed to shut off, disconnect, obstruct, remove, or destroy any part of a fire protection device including a sprinkler system, water main, hydrant, or fire alarm system in any building. However, a sprinkler system, water main, hydrant or other device may be temporarily shut off, disconnected or partially removed to make needed repairs or to prevent freezing or other property damage provided that the Fire Department is notified immediately.

Please note that the Inspectional Services Department, in complying with the Massachusetts State Building Code, also requires a sprinkler system permit and a fire alarm system permit.

A link on the City of Cambridge website may provide additional information on permits and applications. Access additional information at the following website address: http://www2.cambridgema.gov/CFD/FirePrevention.cfm

The above list is not all-inclusive, but only used as a guideline. If questions remain after referencing Massachusetts Fire Prevention Regulations 527 CMR, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 148, or Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMR, please call the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Cambridge Fire Department at 617/349-4918. For Smoke Dector Compliance Inspection, please call 617/349-4971.

HOURS FOR PERMITS
MONDAY – FRIDAY (except Wednesday)
8:00AM TO 10:00AM
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WEDNESDAY
8:30AM TO 10:00AM

Office Hours are 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. excluding holidays

What are the other City departments issuing fire safety permits and how can they be contacted?
Inspectional Services Department - Hours: Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday to Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m
831 Massachusetts Avenue – 1st Floor
Phone 617/349-6100; Fax 617/349-6132; TTY 617/349-6112

License Commission - Hours: Hours: Monday: 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday to Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m
831 Massachusetts Avenue – 1st Floor
Phone 617/349-6140; Fax 617/ 49-6132; TTY 617/349-6112

City Manager
Robert W. Healy

Deputy City Manager
Richard C. Rossi

City Council
Mayor Henrietta Davis
Vice Mayor E. Denise Simmons
Councillor Leland Cheung
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Councillor Marjorie C. Decker
Councillor Craig E. Kelley
Councillor David P. Maher
Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
Councillor Minka vanBeuzekom

The Community Development Department of the City of Cambridge has prepared a Guide to City Offices and Permitting, a city-wide map of all permit issuing agencies, their contact information, and a comprehensive listing of permits issued by various City departments. If you would like to receive a copy, please call 617/349-4600. Other permit brochure titles currently available by dialing the same number include:

Step-by-Step Guide to Building Permits
Step-by-Step Guide to Curb Cuts
Step-by-Step Guide to Starting a Business in Cambridge
Step-by-Step Guide to Obtaining Historical Commission Certificates and Neighborhood Conservation District Commission Certificates

The City of Cambridge does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The City will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.

The information contained in this document may not be complete or fully up to date and is subject to change. To confirm information regarding this permitting process, contact the appropriate City of Cambridge Department. This document may be used strictly for informational purposes. All other uses require the written permission of the City of Cambridge.