

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:

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

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, as well as for Smoke Dector Compliance Inspection please call the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Cambridge Fire Department at 617/349-4918.

HOURS FOR PERMITS

MONDAY – FRIDAY (except Wednesday)
8:00AM TO 10:00AM

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: 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.