

Commercial Permit Holder Responsibilities – After the Permit is Issued

Commercial Projects

Now that you have obtained your building permit, we want your project to go smoothly. In our experience, communication is key to a successful outcome. This document explains inspection requirements, how to schedule inspections, how to obtain a certificate of occupancy or letter of completion, as well as expectations and procedures related to the construction phase of the project. Find an explanation of types of inspections needed at the end of the document. Please contact the project inspector with any questions.

Do not begin work prior to obtaining the required permit for the specific work. For example, a building permit does not authorize the start of electrical, plumbing or mechanical work.

PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETINGS

A pre-construction meeting provides an opportunity to establish understanding, expectations and responsibilities for the construction and design team and city staff and to create a framework for problem solving prior to the start of a major construction project. Construction Services staff is committed to helping developers, contractors and owners achieve success.

Pre-construction meetings are required for most new commercial buildings, for other large or complex commercial or multi-family residential construction projects, and when a project includes phased permitting.

The pre-construction meeting agenda will include things like:

- Introduction to the city's project team,
- Explanation of the process for scheduling and recording inspections,
- The need for inspector access to required documents at the job site,
- The process for obtaining approval for changes to the plans or specifications after the permit is issued,
- Special inspections,
- An overview of the process for approval of occupancy.

City participants will include inspectors, plans examiners and other city staff responsible for approval of the project's components, such as storm water management, erosion control and landscaping. We expect that the owner or their representative, project architect, project engineer, civil engineer, project manager, project superintendent, subcontractors' superintendents, and special inspectors attend the pre-construction meeting.

The construction inspector for the project will coordinate the pre-construction meeting. Meetings are held at City Hall. **Discuss the pre-construction meeting with your inspector before any work begins.**

INSPECTION REQUESTS

Request inspections 24 hours in advance of the time the inspection is needed by calling the inspector and leaving a voice mail message with your name, complete address of the work site, permit number and a phone number where you can be reached. Inspectors' names and phone numbers are listed on your permits.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED ON THE JOB SITE FOR INSPECTIONS

The following items must be on the job site and available for inspectors at all times. These documents are the mechanism for communication about the project. If these documents are not on site and available, the inspection will not be approved.

- The inspection card that was provided when the building permit was issued
- The approved site copy of the building plans that are stamped BUILDING SAFETY REVIEWED
- If the approved plans include a site plan, survey, specification or project manual, civil plans, or any other documents, they must also be on the job site
- Approved changes or delayed submittal items
- Special inspection form and records

INSPECTION CARD AND CORRECTION ORDERS

Inspectors will indicate inspection results on the permit card. Correction orders will be given verbally or in writing and will be annotated on the inspection card. When verbal or written orders are given, make sure that the inspector's order is clearly understood. Ask follow-up questions if needed.

SPECIAL INSPECTIONS

The special inspector serves as an agent of the owner and is responsible to submit reports to the construction inspector. During the plan review process, the determination is made as to whether the building code requires special inspections (Sis) for each project. If special inspections are required, the approved Special Inspection Form indicates what items require SIs and who is designated to do each type of special inspection. Special inspections do not take the place of other required city inspections. Work requiring SIs may not be covered or concealed until required inspections are complete and approved. For example, even if the special inspector has observed rebar and concrete, the city inspector must do an inspection and give the okay to proceed.

For required special inspections, the building code requires special inspectors and testing agencies to be retained by the owner or the owner's agent, not by the contractor. The intent of this code provision is to avoid a conflict of interest.

The inspector will review inspection and testing reports and take appropriate actions if identified deficiencies are not corrected. The building code requires that the inspector receive a final report of special inspections prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy or letter of completion.

If a deficiency is identified during a special inspection, or if a test fails, the contractor must be immediately notified so that corrective steps can be taken promptly. It is the responsibility of the registered design professional, not the role of the special inspector, to determine what remedial work is required to correct a deficiency.

The special inspector and testing agencies must prepare reports that document each inspection or test. Reports must clearly identify the work that was inspected or tested, any deficiencies that were identified and the resolution. Interim reports must include all of the individual inspection and testing reports along with a summary.

After all of the required inspections and tests have been performed, a final report of special inspections certifying that all of the required inspections and tests have been completed and that all identified deficiencies have been corrected or resolved must be submitted to the construction inspector.

REVIEW OF CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO PLANS

Any changes or additions to the approved plans, including but not limited to change orders, architect's supplemental information or requests for proposals must be submitted to the plans examiner for review prior to commencement of work. Inspectors will not authorize deviations from construction documents in the field.

OTHER REQUIRED SUBMITTALS FOR REVIEW AFTER PERMIT IS ISSUED

Any items approved in the review process as a delayed submittal must be submitted to the plans examiner prior to the specified date or project phase. Failure to do so may result in delays.

Fire-stopping details and shop drawings must be approved by the design professional prior to submitting to the plans examiner. A copy of the city-approved details and drawings must be kept on the job site with the approved plans.

Inspectors may encounter work or construction issues on the job site that have not been addressed in the approved plans. When this occurs, the inspector will instruct the permit holder to submit plans for that work that has been prepared and certified by the design professional. Work must not proceed until plans have been reviewed and approved and an approved site copy located on the job site.

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY OR LETTER OF COMPLETION

When all work is complete and final inspections have been approved, a Certificate of occupancy or Letter of Completion will be issued.

- The project must be complete and all city inspections must be approved
- All required permits related to the project, including by other agencies, must be issued
- Documentation of required inspections, including by other city divisions like Planning and Engineering and by outside agencies like MN Department of Health must be completed must be provided to Construction Services
- The final report of special inspection must be submitted
- Required certifications, commissioning reports, balancing reports, etc. must be received by Construction Services

Required Inspections

Commercial Projects

The state building code requires that the person doing work authorized by a permit must notify the inspector when work is ready for inspection and provide access to and a means for completion of the inspections.

- **Footing Inspections**
Prior to pouring any concrete, all footing and formwork, including reinforcement and miscellaneous embedment must be inspected.
- **Foundation Wall Inspections**
Poured concrete walls must be inspected prior to pouring concrete. All foundation walls must be inspected prior to backfilling.
- **Site Utility Inspections**
All site utilities, including the water service, sanitary sewer system(s), storm sewer etc. must be inspected and/or tested prior to covering.
- **Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical and Fire Sprinkler System Work**
All plumbing piping, including waste/vent and water piping must be inspected prior to covering. All mechanical ductwork, fire dampers, flues, controls and equipment, and gas, hydronic and process piping must be inspected prior to covering. All electrical wiring, controls and equipment must be inspected prior to covering.
- **Insulation/Energy Code Compliance Inspection**
All required insulation and vapor barriers shall be inspected and approved prior to covering. This includes the exterior envelope, and any duct, convection pipes or apparatuses requiring insulation.

- **Firestopping**
All penetrations of any fire-resistive membrane, including walls, floors, roofs, ceilings, and others, must be inspected for proper placement and installation of the required fire-stop system. All sealing of fire-rated penetrations must be inspected and approved prior to covering.
- **Structural/Framing Inspection**
All structural and non-structural framing work must be inspected and approved prior to covering. ***All roughed-in plumbing, electrical, HVAC, sprinklers, and other systems must be inspected and approved prior to framing inspections.***
- **Minnesota Department of Health Inspections**
Inspections by MN Department of Health may be required for commercial kitchen installations, food and beverage establishments and other associated operations. Contact the MDH for information about required MDH inspections.
- **Required Special Inspections**
During the plan review process, the determination is made as to whether the building code requires special inspections for each project. If special inspections are required, the approved Special Inspection Form indicates what items require them and who is designated to do each type of special inspection. Special inspections do not take the place of other required inspections. Work requiring special inspections may not be covered or concealed until required inspections are complete and approved.
- **Other Required Inspections**
Some projects with specific equipment or systems require inspections by other agencies. For example, elevators must be inspected by the elevator inspector from the MN Department of labor and industries. These inspections must be completed before Duluth give final inspection approval.
- **Fire Code and Fire Protection Systems Inspections**
Automatic fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, high piled storage and other items under fire marshal jurisdiction will be inspected by the Fire Marshal or Fire Protection Systems Inspector and must be approved prior to final inspection and approval of occupancy of the project.
- **Final Inspections**
A final inspection is required for plumbing, electrical, mechanical, fire sprinkler, fire alarm and other systems after completion of all work. When all work is approved for compliance with applicable code requirements, a certificate of occupancy or letter of completion can be issued.