

# Building Your Business

## A Guide to Permits, Inspections and Licenses for New or Expanding Businesses



City of Sand Springs  
Neighborhood Services Department  
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Sand Springs, OK 74063  
[www.sandspringsok.org](http://www.sandspringsok.org)

### Getting Started...

New and expanding businesses are very important to the citizens of Sand Springs. Making those businesses happen requires a partnership with the City through the planning and construction processes. City staff in several departments are coordinated through Planning/Neighborhood Services to assure the partnership occurs from initial planning to opening the doors.

Commercial endeavors are frequently a complex process when it comes to zoning requirements, construction and trade codes, traffic flow and drainage issues, parking and landscaping, and other regulatory matters. There are frequently requirements, processes and costs that many business owners do not anticipate. Planning for these matters will provide a more beneficial experience.

Through the process, the ultimate goal is to provide economic benefit to the community while assuring health, safety and welfare protections.

### Start Planning...

Opening a new business requires a lot of planning before any investment begins in bricks, mortar and inventory. Planning/Neighborhood Services staff can provide general assistance regarding zoning, construction, and parking requirements for a variety of prospective sites — including both existing buildings and developable land. Initial planning meetings are strongly encouraged.

Once a location is chosen, the business owner should begin to prepare specific site plans that include building location and use, parking areas, landscaping and any unusual traffic or drainage characteristics. The City will assemble necessary staff to review these initial plans with the business owner. This offers an exchange of ideas and gives the business owner a general sense of what is going to be expected in the construction process. Engineers, architects or other persons with an interest in the business are encouraged to attend.

### What Does It Cost...

Building permit fees are primarily based on the square footage of a new or expanded building, or the area being renovated. Inspection fees, included in the permit's cost, are based on the size of services or facilities. Specific fees are calculated on an individual basis and can vary significantly. A complete fee schedule is available in the Neighborhood Services office. Staff can prepare an estimate of permit and inspection fees for an individual project upon request. Also, a breakdown of fees assessed is included with each building permit.

## **Application and Review...**

From the initial meeting, a formal set of plans can be prepared if a building permit is necessary, or the Certificate of Occupancy process can begin. Building permits for all new or expanded commercial buildings, as well as most renovations of existing buildings, will require **TWO** professionally prepared construction paper plan sets and **ONE** digital. These sets include building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical plans, an accurate landscaping plan, parking and traffic flow plans, and engineered drainage plans.

A zoning change, variance or special exception may also be required to accommodate the type of business proposed. Office, commercial and industrial uses are divided into different zoning categories. Staff will advise on whether a use is allowable in a particular zoning district, or what options may exist to make it allowable.

A building permit application and plan sets can be submitted by the business or property owner, or any other interested party. Submittals must be prepared and authenticated by an engineer or architect. The formal plan review process is at least 10 working days. Longer review times may be necessary if the submittals are inaccurate or incomplete.

The review process includes zoning, building and trade code compliance; drainage, utility, environmental and traffic flow studies, and fire prevention issues as determined by the Fire Marshal. Separate plans shall be submitted independently to the Health Department or any necessary State or Federal agency. Business owners or their agents should be prepared to answer questions and make additional submittals as required.

## **Time to Build...**

Once a building permit is issued, construction begins in accordance with adopted City building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical codes, as well as parking, landscaping and other development requirements. The City will perform a minimum of 18 inspections on the structural and systems (electrical, plumbing and mechanical) elements of the building. Architects, engineers and trades people are familiar with code requirements. The inspections process verifies their work is being done properly.

Depending on the project's size, numerous additional inspections may be required — including utility service lines and drainage components. Landscaping inspections will also be done to assure installations follow approved plans.

Erosion control measures are required at all times during construction. Likewise, an earth change permit and inspections will be necessary if soils displacement exceeding six feet or retaining walls exceeding four feet are involved.

Inspections are usually done in a timely manner — with urgent priority given to work that involves an open ditch or timed delivery of materials such as concrete. Requests called in before 9 a.m. usually receive same-day service.

## What's Looked At...

Structural inspections are done at the footing, framing and final stages. Electrical inspections are done at the temporary pole, rough, temp-to-building meter service and final stages. Plumbing inspections are done at the rough, top-out, temporary gas meter and final stages — as well as water, sewer and gas services. Mechanical (heat and air systems) inspections are done at the overhead duct and final stages. Some of these specific elements may require multiple inspections.

Drainage structures, fire systems, landscaping and parking areas are checked during the installation and Certificate of Occupancy stages.

It is critical for the owner, contractor or other person in charge of construction to assure all inspections are requested, performed and approved before moving on to the next stage of work. Failure to do so may result in removal of installations so inspection items can be exposed.

Interested persons can check on the status of inspections at any time by calling the Neighborhood Services main number.

## Opening the Doors...

All new businesses must pay a \$200.00 Certificate of Occupancy fee whether a building permit is necessary or not.

Before any new business can open in Sand Springs, a Certificate of Occupancy must be issued by Neighborhood Services. The CO process involves a final set of inspections and clearances to assure the location can be safely used. Unless special arrangements are made, a CO must be issued **BEFORE** opening.

Business owners must also assure all City, State and Federal licenses and permits are in place and current before opening.

All new businesses must also register for a **FREE** annual Business License with the City. This can be done on our website or in person at the Neighborhood Services office.

## Some Important Things To Remember...

- Commercial ventures are complex endeavors that require large amounts of planning before construction begins or the doors open. The City of Sand Springs is an excellent resource to assist in the planning process. However, the business or property owner is the one responsible for making adequate plans.
- Patience is a virtue in commercial endeavors. Unexpected issues can and do come up during the planning and construction processes. Be prepared and adaptable.
- All efforts are made by the City of Sand Springs to accommodate the designs and desires of business and property owners. It is something great pride is taken in. However, this is a regulatory environment and basic legal and code requirements must prevail to assure a safe, healthy, prosperous and aesthetically pleasing community.
- During the building permit or CO review process, the most common issues that hold up approval are fire systems and separations, grease interceptors (eating establishments), adequate landscaping plans, and proper draining plans and reports. Addressing these issues thoroughly *before* submitting a permit application will speed the review process along.

- Separate sign permits are required for all commercial signage. Specific zoning code requirements regulate the number, type and size of signs allowable. Professional sign companies are familiar with these codes and can be an excellent planning resource.
- The City of Sand Springs recognizes that business budgets are finite. To make the best use of available resources, work to develop a solid business plan. It is critical to anticipate significant costs in the construction and opening processes. A little homework in advance can avoid a lot of heartache!
- Demographics are important. Sand Springs has a population of about 20,000 and an immediate trade area of about 35,000. The regional trade area spans a broad area from Tulsa to near Stillwater. There is great diversity of interest and income in the community. Businesses that fill a niche specifically oriented to the community tend to be the most successful. Demographic information is available upon request.

### **Who to Call...**

To initiate the development and construction process, prospective businesses are encouraged to meet with City staff at the project's conception so that all parties can have an understanding of what will be involved. Neighborhood Services or Planning and Development staff can facilitate a meeting with affected City departments.

**Neighborhood Services**

**PHONE: (918) 246-2572**

**Planning and Development**

**PHONE: (918) 246-2575**

**Public Works**

**PHONE: (918) 246-2588**

**Fire Marshal**

**PHONE: (918) 246-2551**

**Sand Springs Means Business!**

