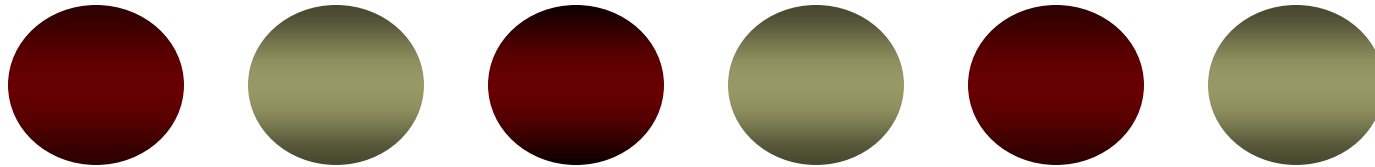




CITY OF HOUSTON
PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION



CODE ENFORCEMENT

Lisa Fleming Brown, CPM
Administration Manager

Code Enforcement Group

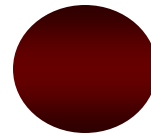
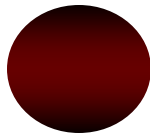
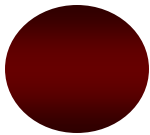
Who we are...

Our group regulates all construction within the city limits. We enforce the City of Houston **Construction Codes** for both residential and commercial construction.



Our Mission...

Assuring safe and healthy living, recreational and work environments for people throughout the City of Houston by efficiently administering the building code and providing exceptional service.



Permits

Permits. Most projects require a permit. Any alteration, repair, remodel, renovation, or new construction in both residential and commercial buildings requires permits. Any work done to repair, replace, alter or install mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment also requires a permit, but if no plans are involved these certain trade permits may be obtained online by the licensee.

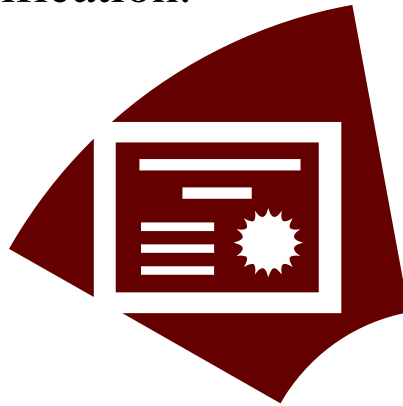
Permit Exemptions. Some examples of the items exempt from a permit are:

- Painting, carpet, tile and wood flooring
- Interior trim and similar finish work.
- Wood or metal fences up to 8 feet tall
- Decks up to 30 inches above the ground



Certificates of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy must be obtained before a commercial building or structure may be occupied. A new certificate is required when there is change to an existing occupancy classification.

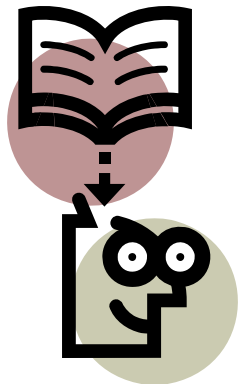


If no application is on file for a building, it is subject to immediate inspection. The owner or agent will be given a 10-day notice to make an application and pay inspection fees. If the owner or agent fails to comply, citations may be issued each day until the application is made and fees are paid.

Starting a new project...



Starting a new project can be challenging and overwhelming. There are many things that need to be considered before you start. It is crucial that you get informed to avoid confusion, delays and money loss.



The following information will assist you in understanding the permitting process and hopefully make the journey easier. It pertains to new constructions, additions, build outs, changes of use and remodels

Planning & Research

Before you buy a property, consider the following:

- ☑ Make sure you can financially and legally build your proposed project
- ☑ Legal – Deed restrictions and property liens
- ☑ Survey and property lines (Ensure that your structure can be built in the proposed location)
- ☑ Utility availability (Assess if water and sanitary capacity and utilities are available or if additional fees may be required)
- ☑ Platting (May be required if there is a change of use or occupancy for the property)
- ☑ Parking (Determine requirements for the type of occupancy proposed)
- ☑ Setback (May be required where the proposed business abuts a major thoroughfare)
- ☑ Floodplain (New fees and other requirements as of October 2006)
- ☑ Research existing Certificates of Occupancy



Design Preparation

Does my project require an Engineer or Architect?

See attached flow charts from Texas Boards of Architect & Professional Engineers

Does the project required a specialized consultant or an additional step?

- ◆ Historical Review
- ◆ Asbestos Survey
- ◆ TDLR Accessibility Review
- ◆ Elevation Certificates
- ◆ Sprinklers
- ◆ Fire Alarm
- ◆ Electronic Locks

Who can purchase what permits and when?

The building permit may be purchased by the owner, agent, contractor. General Contractors are not required to be licensed.

Only licensed contractors can purchase trade permits after the building permit has been sold.

- ◆ Electrical
- ◆ Mechanical
- ◆ Plumbing
- ◆ Sprinklers
- ◆ Fire Alarm
- ◆ Sidewalk

What is the scope of work for this project classified as?

- ◆ New Construction (ground up)
- ◆ Repair (replacing - like for like materials)
- ◆ Build out (tenant improvement)
- ◆ Expansion/addition
- ◆ Remodel (extensive and minor)
- ◆ Change of Use (Converting from one occupancy to another)

Codes in Effect

- 2003 International Building Code
- 2000 International Fire Code
- 2000 Uniform Plumbing Code
- 2000 Uniform Mechanical Code
- 2008 National Electrical Code
- 2008 Houston Commercial Energy Conservation Code (based on ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2004)
- City of Houston Design Manual
- City of Houston Code of Ordinances



Occupancy Classification

Occupancy classification is essential in the code review. The code classifies the structure/space in a particular category relative to hazards. Throughout the code the specific classification will determine whether sprinklers are required, more exits, ventilation requirements, restrooms and the height and size of the building.

A – Assemblies	B – Business	E – Educational
Places where people gather EX: Bars, Restaurants, Dance Halls, Game Rooms, Places of Worship	Services EX: Office, Post Office, Motor vehicle showrooms, Outpatient Clinic, College classrooms, hair salons, nail salons	Through the 12th Grade EX: Schools & some Daycares
F – Factory	H – High Hazard	I – Institutional
Fabrication Facilities EX: (F1 Moderate Hazard) Bakeries, Electronics EX: (F2 Low Hazard) Brick, Glass, Gypsum	Process and generation of hazardous material. EX: Explosives, Flammables, Corrosives	EX: Jails, Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Daycares
M - Mercantile	R - Residential	S – Storage
EX: Stores, Motor vehicle dispensing facilities, showrooms	EX: Houses, Apartments, Motels, Hotels	EX: Low and Moderate Storage
U – Utility		
EX: Fences, towers, tanks, carports, garages		

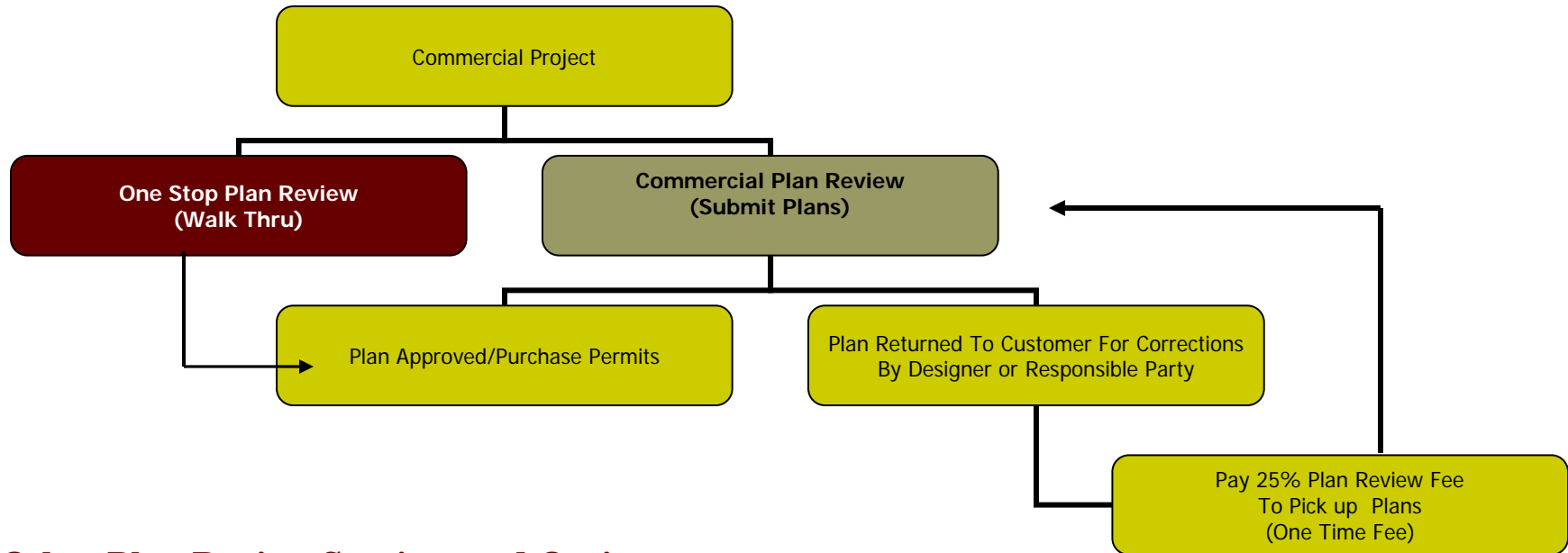
Application & Plan Submittal

- Commercial Building Permit Application (with assigned project number)
- 2 complete sets of plans (4 sets if hazmat/high piled storage is involved)
- Fill & Grade Worksheet
- Storm and Water Utility Letter
- Waste Water Capacity Reservation Letter
- Asbestos Survey
- 2008 Commercial Energy Conservation Form, or Software Report
- HFD Owner's Statement of Intended Use for Storage Occupancies
- Ensure Plan Review Prerequisites are met



Remember: Addresses are critical and must be verified for new construction!

Plan Review Process



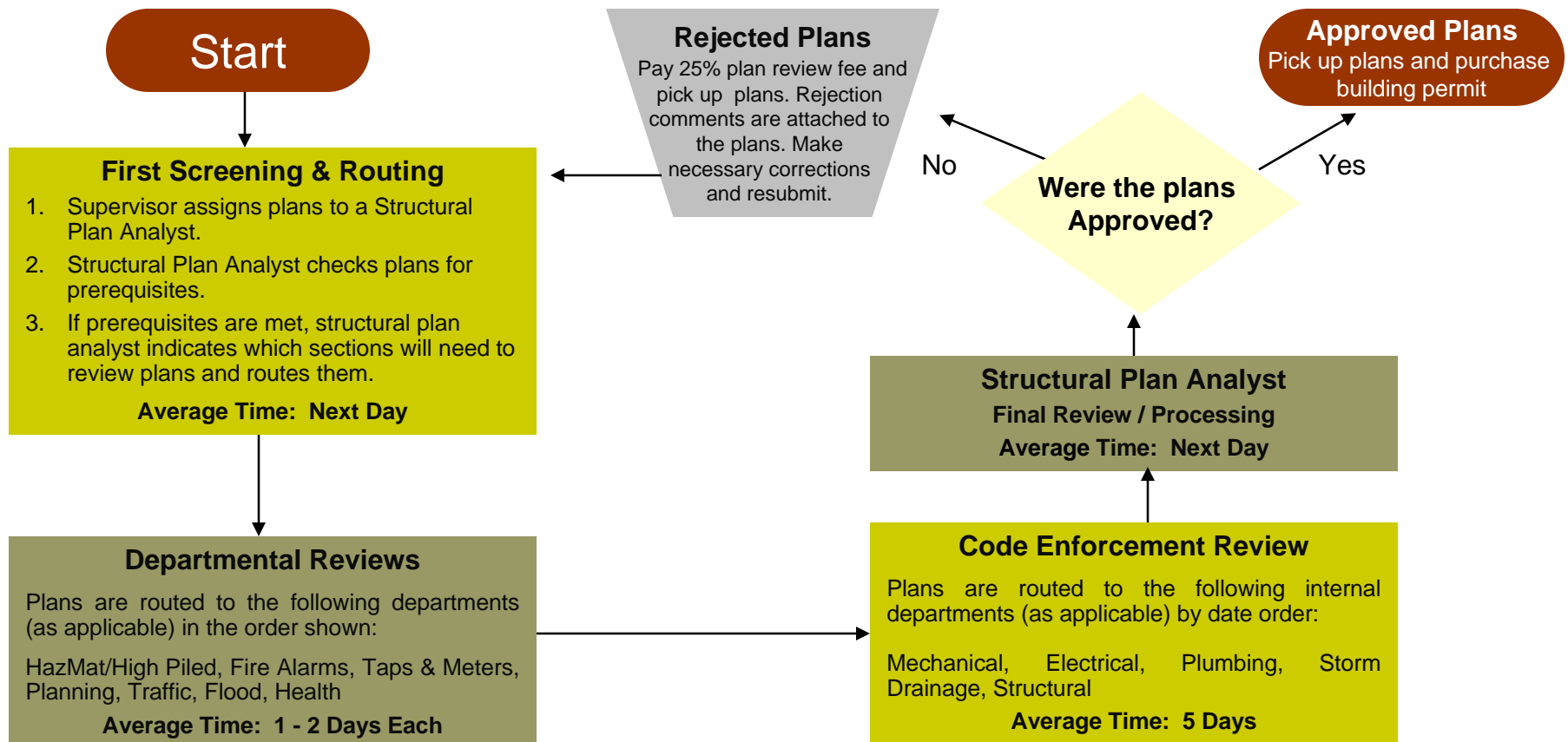
Other Plan Review Services and Options

- **One Stop Plan Review** (Allows customers with minor remodels/lease space build outs to have a plan analyst review plans and have the permit issued in the same day if certain restrictions are met; including 30 minute maximum plan review.)
- **Quick Start Program** (For projects exceeding \$1 million valuation with a limited number of reviews remaining, a 24 hour turnaround is available.)
- **LEED Incentive**
- **Plan Analyst and Design Professional appointments** (In order to resolve outstanding comments for approval)
- **Online Status Check** and Viewing of Rejection Comments at www.houstonpermits.org

Contact Plan Review at 713-535-7500 for more information.

Submittal of Plans

This flow chart diagrams how plans are routed through our system when plans are submitted for Commercial Plan Review.



Average turn around time is 11 days.

Inspections and Utility Release

- Work may begin as soon as the permits are purchased.
- Plans and permits must remain on the job site for inspections.
- Inspections are required at various stages of construction and may be scheduled by phone or at www.houstonpermits.com.
- Call for inspections prior to covering work to be inspected with sheetrock, insulation, concrete, sheathing, etc... to avoid unnecessary expense and time removing covering.
- Temporary Utilities may be obtained after **ALL** permits are purchased
- All revisions or changes to the original plans must be approved before the Final Inspection
- After all inspections are complete, you may request Certificate(s) of Occupancy
- Remodels/Repairs are usually issued a Certificate of Compliance



Frequently Missed Inspection Items

STRUCTURAL

Foundation:

- Beam Size
- Rebar Size/Stirrup Spacing
- Corner Bars
- Splice Lengths Location on Property

Frame Inspection:

- Wall Bracing
- Joist Hangers
- Sealing Penetrations
- Draftstops
- Fire-blocking

Windstrap:

- Proper Amount of Nails
- Missing Straps
- Nailing Pattern on Sheathing
- Nuts on Anchor Bolts

Finals:

- Handrail Termination / Return to Wall
- Safety Glass
- Posting Address



PLUMBING

- DWV test not complete on wall cover
- New materials used not listed to standards
- Wrong materials for the application
- Foundation poured prior to inspection
- Wall covered prior to inspection

Frequently Missed Inspection Items

ELECTRICAL

- TCI permit for power prior to final required
- Provide request letter for Temporary Utilities (TLIF) prior to utility release
- Change in use or occupancy. Wire to commercial standards with Approved Plans
- Provide approved drawings on job site
- Electrical service not built in accordance with approved drawings
- Ground wires undersized
- Secure main in panel
- Overcurrent protection – too large
- Walls covered without inspection



MECHANICAL

- Install fire dampers as per manufacturer's installation instructions
- Seal return air
- Provide proper clearance for B- Vent
- No approved plans on jobsite
- Flexible gas connector is run through appliance housing
- Provide proper service access and path to condensing units
- Attic pull down stairs are not the correct size and capacity and are not installed per manufacturer's instructions
- Access denied. Homeowner not home (re-inspection fee required).

Existing Buildings

If you are planning to open a business by moving into an existing building or lease space without any construction work involved, you may apply for a Certificate of Occupancy through our Occupancy Inspections Section.





Occupancy / Life Safety Inspections

- A Certificate of Occupancy must be acquired before a building or structure may be occupied.
- If no application is on file for a building, it is subject to immediate inspection. The owner or agent will be given a 10-day notice to make an application and pay inspection fees.
- Most structures must meet the requirements of the building code that was enforced at the time the building was constructed and/or it must meet the requirements for Life Safety guidelines.

Application Process

- An Occupancy Application (Form 1045) must be completed and pay the applicable fees.
- Any open permits/projects would need to be closed before an application can be processed.
- Approximately 2 weeks after the application date, a team of inspectors will go to the site and will ensure that the building meets the requirements of the Life Safety Appendix and other life safety requirements.
- An Occupancy Report will be mailed to the applicant, two weeks after the inspection. The report will indicate whether any items require corrections and if any permits are required. The applicant has six months to comply.

Anything that is found to be unsafe, unsanitary or hazardous must be corrected immediately

- Once the final inspection is approved, the applicant will receive the Certificate of Occupancy

Change of Use

When changing the use of a building or lease space from the original occupancy, two complete sets of plans may be required to be submitted. This would be similar to the process of permitting a new construction discussed previously.

A change in occupancy from one occupancy classification to a different one requires a new Certificate of Occupancy. It is likely that the change of classification will require additional work be performed to assure compliance.

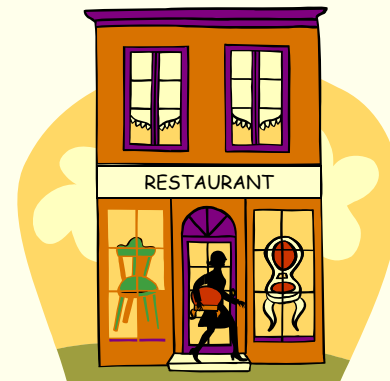
Bridal Store (Group M)



TO



Restaurant (Group A)



Name Change

Name changes to a Certificate of Occupancy may be requested **ONLY** when there is an existing Certificate of Occupancy.

- A name change does not allow for changes in use or increase in occupant load
- A name change is not required by the codes.
- A routine “go by” inspection is performed for approval before a certificate is issued.

**Michelangelo's
Restaurant**



**Leo's
Restaurant**



Existing Apartments

Each apartment building is required to have a separate Certificate of Occupancy.

Habitability Inspection Program

- To ensure that all multi-family rental properties with three or more residential units are maintained properly, the City of Houston established the Habitability Inspection Program.
- All apartments must register online for habitability inspection purposes.
- Once registered, the Habitability group will perform an inspection every four years.
- Proper ventilation, sanitary, structural, and safe wiring.



One Stop Business Center



Mayor's Office One Stop Business Center was created to assist the citizens of Houston with the process of opening their own business. The staff at the center provides customers with information about city, county, state and federal regulations affecting their business. They also have available the "*Getting Started Packets*" which include checklists that are specifically designed for each business type and location.

For more information, visit them at 900 Bagby (Public Level) Houston, TX 77002 or contact them at 832-393-0954.

Online at <http://www.houstontx.gov/onestop/index.html>

Fire Permits

The Fire Department requires renewable and non-renewable fire permits for certain types of occupancies. Some examples of these types of permits are:

Apparatus Access / Control Gates	Fire depository, Key Boxes	Liquid or Gas Fueled Vehicles or Equipment in Assembly Buildings
Covered Mall Buildings	Fumigation & Thermal Insecticidal Fogging	Open Flames and Candles
Dry Cleaning Plants	Hazardous Materials	Places of Assembly
Explosives / Fireworks / Pyrotechnics	High Piled Storage	Motor Vehicle Fuel-Dispensing Stations
Fire Alarms (Installation Permit Only)	Lumber Yards & Woodworking Plants	Storage of Scrap Tires & Tire Byproducts

The Houston Fire Department's Permit Office is located in our office and may be reached during normal business hours at 713-535-7897.



ARA – Commercial Permits

The Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department requires permits for certain types of business activities to ensure community standards. Please note that before most of these permits can be issued, you must apply for a Certificate of Occupancy at our office. Below are some of the permits they offer:

Alcohol-Related
Business



Ballrooms



Common
Market



Game Rooms



Sound & Noise
Related Equip.



Metal Recycling
Entities



Commercial Permits can be purchased in person at 611 Walker, Houston TX 77002 or online at www.houstonpermits.com

For more information, please contact **713-837-9838**

Sign Permits

Permits are also required for the installation of signs. The Sign Administration Section is responsible for enforcing the Houston Sign Code. The Houston Sign Code provides standards for the use, quantity, construction and location of advertising signs throughout the city. The code also regulates off-premises signs and billboards in the city as well as its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

NOTE: A business cannot apply for a sign permit until an application for a Certificate of Occupancy is on file.



CONTACT INFORMATION

2636 South Loop West Suite 675

Houston, Texas 77054

Hours: 7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Phone Number: 713-218-5801

www.houstonpermits.com

www.houstonpermits.com

City of Houston
The Official Site for Houston, Texas

HOME | I WANT TO... | GOVERNMENT | RESIDENTS | BUSINESS | DEPARTMENTS | VISITORS

Search Website [] Entire Site... [GO] My ZIP Code 77002 [GO]

Public Works and Engineering > Planning and Development Services Division

PW&E Home Page

PURCHASE PERMITS
New Users
Login

For questions about PERMIT PURCHASES please contact us by email at: Linda.Tarver@CityofHouston.net

BUILDING PERMIT-FEE ESTIMATOR
Fee Calculator

For questions about PERMIT FEE CALCULATOR please contact us by email at: Luis.Villasana@cityofhouston.net

SCHEDULE INSPECTIONS
Schedule Inspections and Inspections History
To receive inspection results by e-mail or cell phone sign up

For questions about SCHEDULE INSPECTIONS please click here

CHECK PERMIT STATUS
Plan Review
Plan Review Status (Real Time Pages)

Permits Sold
Search for Sold Permits (Sold permits for the last 3 years)

For questions about PERMIT STATUS please contact us by email at: pd.code@cityofHouston.net

OTHER INFORMATION
Code Enforcement Main Web Page
Customer Service Survey

Purchase Permits
(Certain Restrictions Apply)

Estimate Building Permit Fee

Schedule Inspections

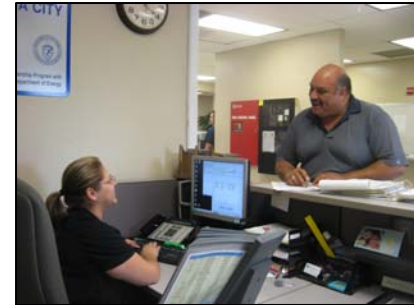
Check the status of Plans

Code Enforcement Home Page

We are Here to Help!

PLEASE CALL US:

- Customer Assistance & Code Development Office 713-535-7733
- Commercial Plan Review 713-535-7500
- Planning 713-535-7779
- Taps & Meters 832-395-4400
- General Information 713-535-7510
- Occupancy Inspection 713-535-7730



OR VISIT US ONLINE:

- Code Enforcement
www.publicworks.cityofhouston.gov/planning/enforcement
- Permits/Inspections/Plan Review
www.houstonpermits.org
- Planning & Development
www.houstonplanning.com
- Houston Fire Department
www.houstonfire.com
- General Information
www.houstontx.gov/311
- Flood Maps
www.tsarp.org
- City of Houston Main Webpage
www.houstontx.gov

