

April 2019 – News from the Division

Effective Immediately – New Occupancy Features for Permits Online

The purpose of this communication is to announce the launch of a new set of features for the City's Permits Online system, which revamps the way requests for occupancy are submitted and processed.

All customers can:

- ✓ View document submission requirements via auto email notification.
- ✓ Submit requests for occupancy online using a new web form.
- ✓ Receive auto email notifications when documents have been rejected.

Registered Permits Online users can:

- ✓ View a list of required documents for Life Safety Tests and Occupancy online.
- ✓ Submit required documents online.
- ✓ Track the status of active Occupancy Permits (including document review, inspections, and outstanding items of non-compliance).
- ✓ Pay occupancy fees online.

Background

For over a decade the department has been working with industry on systematic process improvements related to construction permits. While the primary focus has been on reducing permit review times, many additional projects that involve improving the customer experience have been identified and undertaken. Occupancy permits, which in many cases, conclude or close out construction-related permits, often require the coordination of document submissions and inspections, and can involve numerous design professionals, stakeholders and inspectors. The associated complexities can become overwhelming and frustrating at times. Launching Occupancy Permits Online helps to address customer concerns and improve the experience for all.

Objective

One of the main objectives of this initiative is to improve communications related to active Occupancy Permit applications between the department and stakeholders (applicants, occupants, design professionals, tradespeople and general contractors). Communication is enhanced by centralizing information in a secure virtual location that is accessible by project proponents online. Requirements identified during plan review will be posted online for the applicant and/or design professional's reference. Automated email notifications will alert the applicant when action is required. Documents will be uploaded by the applicant online, and feedback will be stored in Permits Online.

Procedural Changes

Along with the convenience of online submission and progress tracking, the following procedural changes have been adopted:

- ✓ All documents required for the issuance of Interim or Final Occupancy Permits, including structural shop drawings, test reports and professional certification letters have to be submitted before the Building Occupancy Permit Request Form. These documents must be deemed acceptable by the City before an Interim or Final Occupancy Permit is issued.

Document submission standards require applicants to coordinate with design professionals prior to submission. The standards contribute to a smoother process because they dramatically decrease the chances of receiving a denied occupancy request.