Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Tip 104

Seattle Permits

Part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Getting an OTC (Online Trade-Construction) Permit

Updated July 25, 2022

Each year SDCI's online trade-construction (OTC) permit service accepts about 17,000 applications for permits. This Tip gives a general summary of the types of permits handled by our OTC team and the streamlined services we provide.

Streamlined Service Features

All OTC permits are processed by our permit technicians electronically after they have been submitted using the Seattle Services Portal.

We have streamlined the application process so that:

- no appointment is necessary
- submit electronically using the **Seattle Services Portal**
- OTC electrical permits are issued immediately to applicants using the Seattle Services Portal
- application **forms** are available online
- walk-ins are available for additional questions and assistance, and the wait time is usually less than 20 minutes
- fees may be paid by Visa, Mastercard, or with a Trust Account using the Seattle Services Portal

Types Of Permits Eligible

Most OTC permits that we issue are for simple projects that don't need plan review. Permits that are OTC eligible include:

- boiler
- electrical* (less than 5,000 square feet, or less than 400 amps)
- fire alarms (see exception below)
- pressure vessel
- refrigeration
- side Sewer/Drainage/Sewer Capping
- single Family/Duplex Furnace*

You can obtain online **permits for electrical work** if plan review is not required.

* For mechanical permits other than for single-family or duplex projects, please see Tips 414, **STFI Mechanical Permits for Commercial and Multifamily Residential**, and 415, **Applicant Responsibilities and Plan Requirements for Mechanical Permits**.

For sign, awning, and billboard permits, see Tip 126, **Sign, Awning, & Billboard Permits**.

Plan Review Applications

Plan review may be required for the following permit types:

- elevator
- certain electrical
- fire alarms with seven or more devices installed

Plumbing permits are approved by Public Health – Seattle & King County staff. Their office is located at 401 5th Ave., Suite 1100.

General OTC Permitting Requirements

ELECTRICAL

In general, we require a permit and inspections any time electrical wiring is installed, altered, extended, or connected to any electrical equipment. You may purchase your electrical permit online using the Seattle Services Portal.

You need an electrical permit for temporary power installations, such as a new construction power pole

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or for power serving special events, such as street fairs and trade shows. You need a service permit when restoring power to a structure.

You do not need a permit for like-in-kind replacement of certain electrical equipment as long as the circuit wasn't altered or changed and it met the code at the time of the original installation. For a full list of items that are exempt from a permit, please see the **Seattle Electrical Code**, section 80.50B.

We do not require a permit for some communications systems in one- and two-family residences a when the systems use less than 1,000 feet of cable.

Application: Your OTC electrical permit application will need the following information:

- work site address
- applicant information
- installer information
- brief job description
- itemized list of what is to be installed, for example, number of connections: receptacles, lights, switches, bath fans, washers, dryers, ranges and services

Fees: We will charge a base fee for all OTC electrical permits. We will charge additional fees based on what you are installing and based on the voltage and amperage. Our rates for temporary power inspections vary depending on whether inspections are scheduled during or outside of normal working hours.

City Light approval: If your electrical work involves installing a new service panel or electrical meter or relocating your existing meter, you need to contact Seattle City Light. If your site is north of Denny Way, call (206) 615-0600. If your site is south of Denny Way, call (206) 386-4200.

FIRE ALARMS

We must review and approve your plans and specifications before you begin installation. The Fire Department will review your plans when 7 or more devices are installed and the system is required to be installed. You must submit drawings and specifications as part of your SDCI permit application using the **Seattle Services Portal**. We will forward the plans to the Fire Department for you. You must include the following information:

- floor plan
- riser diagram
- location of all alarm-initiating and alarm-indicating devices
- alarm control and trouble-signaling equipment
- annunciation
- power connection
- battery calculations
- voltage drop calculations
- wiring types and sizes

For more information on fire alarms, call the Seattle Fire Department at (206) 386-1450 or (206) 386-1443.

Fees: There is a basic fee for fire alarms. Each fire alarm controller and each device (such as horn, strobe, speaker, etc.) costs an additional small fee. Additional Fire Department fees apply.

FIRE SPRINKLERS

Your plans and specifications must be reviewed and approved before you begin installation of 7 or more devices. You must submit drawings and specifications as part of your SDCI Fire Sprinkler permit application using the **Seattle Services Portal**. We will forward the plans to the Seattle Fire Department for you.

Your plan set must meet the following requirements:

- Scalable with the scale clearly specified and graphically depicted.
- Supporting information, (such as hydraulic calculations, material data sheets, etc.) shall be separate, individual, PDF files.
- Rotated as to be easily viewable. Do not mismatch sheet sizes or orientation throughout the set.
- Designated space for a City approval stamp on each sheet. The location shall have a minimum clear space of 3" x 3" and be located in the same space on each sheet.
- Necessary certifications/signatures must be included.
- File names shall clearly describe their contents.

For more information on fire sprinklers, See Seattle Fire Department CAM 5002, **Electronic File Standards: Shop Drawings for Fire Protection Systems**. You can also call the Seattle Fire Department at (206) 386-1450 or (206) 386-1443.

Fees: There is an hourly fee for fire sprinklers. Additional Seattle Fire Department fees will apply.

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BOILER

We require a permit and inspection for all boilers installed in the City of Seattle.

You must supply the following information with your application:

- work site address
- applicant information
- owner/tenant of the work site
- installer information
- boiler information: manufacturer's name, boiler type-electric, steam, hot water, gas, oil, propane
- identification number
- heating surface in square feet

NOTE: *You must comply with the Seattle Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08, Sections 25.08.410 and 25.08.420) for all components external to your building. For more information, visit our* **Noise Abatement Program** *website.*

Fees: Please refer to the **Fee Subtitle** or contact SDCI staff.

PRESSURE VESSEL (UNFIRED)

A pressure vessel is a closed container having a nominal internal diameter exceeding six inches and a volume exceeding 1-1/2 cubic feet. Air compressors, expansion tanks, and air tanks are examples of pressure vessels.

You must supply the following information with your application:

- work site address
- applicant information
- description of installation
- installer information
- pressure vessel information:
  - type
  - manufacturer's name
  - identification number on the pressure vessel
  - size: Diameter or maximum width in feet and length in feet. Round up measurements to the nearest foot.
  - identification number

Fees: Please refer to the **Fee Subtitle** or contact SDCI staff.

REFRIGERATION

We require a refrigeration permit whenever remote refrigerant lines are installed. In order to obtain a refrigeration permit, the installing refrigeration contractor must have a valid refrigeration contractor's license with the City of Seattle.

You must supply the following information with your application:

- work site address
- applicant information
- description of installation
- work site owner/tenant information
- installer information including the City of Seattle refrigeration/contractor license number
- tonnage of each compressor and number of units

NOTE: *You must comply with the Seattle Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08, Sections 25.08.410 and 25.08.420) for all components external to your building. For more information, visit our* **Noise Abatement Program** *website***.**

Fees: We charge a base fee for refrigeration permits, plus an additional amount for each compressor.

SINGLE FAMILY/DUPLEX FURNACE

We require a permit for all heating appliance installations and relocations. You also need a Heating Equipment Sizing Form unless your project meets one of the following exceptions:

- You replace an existing heating appliance with one that uses the same fuel and has the same or lower output capacity.
- You relocate existing equipment within the same space.
- You install a new oil or gas-fired furnace that has the smallest output capacity available from the manufacturer for its type, and that has an output capacity less than 40,000 BTU/h.
- You install a new furnace that is at least 92 percent efficient, or is a multi-stage or continuously-modulating type, and the code official approves not submitting the form.
- You already submitted the form with the building permit application, and the building permit application number is noted on the mechanical permit.

You must provide the following information with your application:

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- work site address
- applicant information
- installer information
- brief job description
- appliance Type:
  - efficiency Rating
  - fuel Type
  - manufacturer
  - model #
  - output in BTU or KW

You can find the Heating System Size forms on our **Energy Code** website.

NOTE: *You must comply with the Seattle Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08, Sections 25.08.410 and 25.08.420) for all components external to your building. For more information, visit our* **Noise Abatement Program** *website.*

Fees: Please refer to the **Fee Subtitle** or contact SDCI staff.

SIDE SEWER/DRAINAGE/SEWER CAPPING

You can get information by visiting Seattle Public Utlities (SPU) **Side Sewer Permit** website, or emailing **sidesewerinfo@seattle.gov**, or calling (206) 684-5362.

ELEVATOR (CONVEYANCE) PERMITS

We require elevator (conveyance) permits to install elevators, escalators, moving walks, dumbwaiters, accessibility lifts, and material lifts.

We require you to submit a clearly organized set of plans with your elevator permit application. You must supply the following information:

- work site address
- name of building
- description of work
- applicant (contractor) information
- owner information
- value of the project
- number of openings
- SDCI conveyance number
- owner's conveyance ID
- contract capacity
- speed

Fees: Elevator fees are complex. Please refer to the **Fee Subtitle** or contact SDCI staff at (206) 684-8860.

If you have questions about a Certificate of Conveyance Inspection, contact **sci_elevator@seattle.gov**. This is the best method to get your certificate in a timely manner.

Application Forms

You can get **application forms** from our website.

Questions?

If you have any questions about OTC permits, you can send a email or live chat with the OTC Permit services staff through our **Contact Us** webpage.

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