

# Building Permit Process Outline



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## COMMERCIAL BUILDING

Swarthmore Borough

Building Permit Process

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*We want your project to be a success, so please let us know how we can help.*

This brochure is your quick guide to commercial building permits in Swarthmore Borough. It is designed to help answer your questions about the process, including:

- ✓ When do I need a permit?
- ✓ Where do I begin?
- ✓ What information do I need to provide in order for my permit application to be complete?
- ✓ What are the steps in the process?
- ✓ How long will the process take?
- ✓ Does a permit ever expire?
- ✓ What is the cost of a building permit?

## Understanding the Commercial Building Permit Process

**When is a Permit Needed?** A building permit is needed for new construction, alterations, remodeling, additions, asbestos removal, or mechanical upgrades. Also, if there is a change of use of the space (i.e. retail to restaurant) a permit is also required.

**Where do I begin?** You can obtain a permit application at Borough Hall or by accessing our online version at [www.swarthmorepa.org](http://www.swarthmorepa.org). You should consult your contractor/architect/engineer/property owner to create detailed plans for the remodeling/renovations. If you have any questions, please contact the Borough office for guidance.

**What is needed to submit an application?** Three sets of signed/stamped detailed construction plans outlining the specifications for the project, a brief description of work to be done, contractor/architect information, including contractor insurance information, total cost of construction and payment for permit. All commercial contractors must be licensed by the Borough. Please note that the electrical application and the plumbing/HVAC permit application are separate from the building permit application (please back out those costs when applying for the building permit).

### What are the steps in the process?

1.) Initial Review – This step is performed by our zoning officer to check if your project is allowed within the land use category (zoning) and complies with Borough zoning regulations.  
2.) Inspector Review – The Borough contracts out inspections for commercial properties (currently with Keystone Municipal Services). This inspector will review all drawings and specs to assure compliance with all applicable laws/regulations. This is where significant questions or issues will be discussed and resolved. If your plans meet all requirements, a permit will be issued to begin working. No work should commence until permits are issued.

3.) Job-Site Visits - The commercial inspector will visit the site to assure the work conforms to the permit, local codes and plans. It is the responsibility of the contractor to arrange for the necessary phase inspections during the course of the work.

4.) Final Approval - The Borough will issue a Certificate of Occupancy once the construction is completed and code compliance inspection is done.

**How long does it take to get the building permit?** Within 30 days of the filing date of the permit.

**Does a permit ever expire?** A permit becomes invalid unless the authorized construction work begins within 180 days after the permit's issuance. Written requests for extension may be submitted to the Borough.

### What is the cost of a building permit?

Permit costs are based on the total valuation of the work. The valuation is established by the estimated cost of the project provided by the applicant on the building permit application. Besides the building permit fee, if your project also includes plumbing, heating and electrical work, a separate fee is required for each trade. (See our fee schedule on-line).

**Emergency repairs?** In the event of an emergency, repairs can be made as long as a permit application is submitted within 3 days of the emergency.

As per State Law, the Borough follows the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code.