



# BENSALEM TOWNSHIP

Building and Planning Department

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## PROCEDURES FOR OPENING A COMMERCIAL BUSINESS

- 1). Determine the zoning classification of the property at which the business is to be located to ensure that your proposed use is permissible at that site. This can be done by obtaining a zoning certification.
- 2). **Any commercial building renovations will require permits.** All plans should be signed and sealed (wet seal) by a licensed Pennsylvania Architect or Engineer. Mall projects also require Mall Management approval on the plans before they are submitted to the Township for review.
  - a). Required permit is the Bensalem Township UCC Application for Commercial Building. This is a single, multi-page comprehensive form which includes sections for all the trades. All aspects of the job are to be submitted at the same time, on this one form, i.e., electric, plumbing, building, mechanical, sprinkler, fire alarms, etc. A total of TWO sets of complete plans must be submitted at the same time the permit is filed. A wet stamp seal is requested on the plans instead of a raised, embossed seal from the design professional.
  - b). Application fee for building permits is **\$25.00 which is non-refundable**. Final permit fees are determined by the fee schedule which is available upon request.
  - c). A response to the building permit will be received within 7 to 10 days depending if all needed information is submitted on plans. All plans should be in compliance with the 2006 International Code Series. All contractors must be licensed in Bensalem Township before permits will be released. If permits are rejected for any reason, the applicant must speak to the Inspector who evaluated the application to rectify any problems.
  - d). There is a **construction tax** (Ordinance # 98-10) on all new or existing businesses creating more units. New commercial buildings are also subject to pay this tax.
  - e). Once permits are approved and issued, work can be started. **Fees will be tripled** for work performed without permits. Inspections are required at each phase of renovation. A specific list of these inspections will be provided when permits are issued.
  - f). At least 2 weeks prior to being ready for your final inspection, a **use and occupancy permit** for the business must be applied for. Contact the Building and Planning Dept. at 215-633-3644. Once all of the inspections are completed and approved, your certificate of occupancy will be ready for pick up within 2-3 business days.
- 3). If no renovations are to take place, you may file for your **use and occupancy permit** immediately. This permit fee is calculated based upon the square footage of the space.
- 4). If the business is installing a new **sign** or refacing the existing one, a permit is required for either.

**Note:** YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO CONTACT THE MUNICIPAL TAX BUREAU AT 215-633-3721 AND THE BUCKS COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH AT 215-949-5805.

**The Fire Marshal's office may be reached at 215-633-3617 for questions pertaining to sprinklers and other fire prevention regulations.**