



CHARLESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire Marshal's Office

Information Bulletin

Fire Plan Review & Permitting

The Charleston Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office conducts plan reviews of fire protection systems and jointly reviews life safety and construction plans with the Building Inspection Division. Each plan submittal is important to us, and we realize the need to provide timely feedback to you regarding your project.

Please be sure to plan appropriately and ensure adequate time for the review and comment period. We do not provide an expedited plan or permit service, the most effective method to move through the process is to provide a complete and accurate submittal. Our goal is to review submissions in accordance with the timeframes outlined on the next page of this document.

The payment and issuance of all permits will occur through the Permit Center. The following information is intended to outline the plan submittal process and ensure necessary documents are submitted.

Applications:

The most recent version of the published applications will be retained on the official City of Charleston website and are available for review and download at www.charleston-sc.gov/fm.

Plan Submittal

Plan submittals must include the current application, and all supplemental information identified on the application, to initiate a review and ensure a smooth and timely review process. Incomplete submittals will be placed on "hold" until all necessary information has been delivered. Sub-trade plans that are associated with a master building project cannot be accepted until the master building permit has been approved. Plans may be uploaded through the Customer Self-Service (CSS) portal, e-mailed to permits@charleston-sc.gov, or dropped off at or mailed to: Permit Center, 2 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401.

Plan Reviewer

Upon receipt of a completed plan submittal package, plans will be assigned by the Fire Marshal's Office to a reviewer. This is generally based on the location within the city but may vary based on workloads or complexity of the project.

Plan Review Goals

Plans will be reviewed during the intake process and assigned to one of five levels (identified on the next page) based on the type and size of the project. Each level includes a projected review time for initial and subsequent submittals. Review times may be extended based on the workload of the Fire Marshal's Office.

Fire Fee Schedule

Permit fees will be established by the City of Charleston and applied to applicable permits and processes. Please review the information bulletin for the [**Fire Fee Schedule**](#) for additional information and details.

Work Without a Permit

Permit fees will be doubled for work commencing without a permit. Payment of the fee shall neither relieve any person from complying with code requirements or other penalties for commencing work without approval.

The following outlines the projected review time for initial and subsequent submittals effective 1/1/2025. Each plan will be assigned to one of five levels based on the criteria below:

Level 1 Goal – Initial submittal review: 4 business days.	
Operational Permits	Mobile Food Vendors (MFV)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire apparatus access gates and controls.• Kitchen exhaust cleaners.• Tents or similar acceptable structures.• Temporary Standpipes.• Special events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Category A: No cooking or warming of food or portable power.• Category B: Warm or reheat food and/or utilize portable power or fuel.• Category C: Mobile food prep with cooking and/or portable power or fuel.

Level 2 Goal - Initial submittal review: 6 business days. Resubmittal review: 4 business days	
Existing Structures	Fire Permits & Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor interior renovations or non-structural changes to existing buildings.• No change of occupancy classification.• Does not alter the egress strategy, egress layout, or egress capacity.• Business License Certificate of Occupancy.• Short Term Rentals• Misc., non-specified permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Installation of limited fire protection systems (alarm panel monitoring sprinkler flow or elevator recall, kitchen suppression systems, or similar).• Fire service underground (new or modification).• Emergency Plans, Late Night Entertainment.• Traffic Calming Device.• Misc., non-specified permits.

Level 3 Goal - Initial submittal review: 12 business days. Resubmittal review: 6 business days		
Existing Structures	Other	Fire Permits & Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural or non-structural and/or additions (may include change of use, occupant load, or altering egress) of areas <5,000 square feet.• Alternative means of design.• Pyrotechnics, flame effects, and similar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change of use.• Alternate means and methods requests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addition of new fire protection systems in buildings protecting areas <5,000 square feet or alterations to existing fire systems that do not change the hazard class.• Site/TRC plans.• Emergency Responder Radio Coverage Systems.

Level 4 Goal - Initial submittal review: 24 business days. Resubmittal review: 12 business days		
Existing Structures	New Structures	Fire Permits & Systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structural or non-structural and/or additions (may include change of use, occupant load, or altering egress) of area >5,000 and <12,000 square feet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <12,000 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addition of new fire protection systems in buildings protecting areas >5,000 sq. ft. and <52,000 sq. ft. or alterations to existing fire systems that change the hazard classification.

Level 5 Goal - Initial submittal review: 30 business days. Resubmittal review: 15 business days		
Existing or New Structures	Fire Permits & Systems	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work area >12,000 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addition of fire protection systems in buildings or areas >52,000 sq. ft	