

# Welcome to Alamo Heights!

## COMMERCIAL TENANT PROCESS

### THE PATH TO YOUR CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (C of O)

Submit plans to the Planning & Development Services Dept. (P&DSD) for **Plan Review** to request Building Permit;  
Timeline: 10-21 business days review time for commercial plans (if applicable)

Requests for **New Addresses** must be submitted with the request for permit.  
(if applicable)

Once the **Building Permit** is issued, inspections for **each phase can be scheduled** by calling (210) 826-0516 and following the prompts to the automated inspections voice mailbox.

All **Temporary Business Signs**, limited to maximum 4' tall by 8' wide, require permit.  
All **Permanent Business Signs**, whether on the building, awning, windows or doors, etc. require Architectural Review Board (ARB) review and permit(s). Construction costs > \$50,000 require **Design Review** of the ARB and City Council.

If you haven't already, at this point you should be prepared to **Submit an Application** to the P&DS Department for your permanent business sign review to minimize any delay from opening of business to the installation of your permanent sign.

**Submit** an application w/ fee for **Certificate of Occupancy** at least 1-2 wks prior to completion of construction

- Food Establishments will require a **Food Establishment License** and Health inspection by Alamo Heights;
- Establishments serving/selling alcohol will require an **Alcohol License** issued by Texas Alcohol & Beverage Commission as well as Alamo Heights.

Along with the 'Building Final' construction-related inspection, Schedule Food and/or Alcohol establishment **inspection(s)**

*We look forward to working with you as a valued member of our community!*

*\*\*\*This is a recommended process flow chart. Some steps may be able to be combined or re-arranged. Please contact City staff with any questions well in advance of the proposed business opening to avoid potential delays. See next page(s) for more detailed information on these steps.\*\*\**



**Commercial Tenant Process:****New business or relocating to new office space**

*If not doing any interior construction/renovation, start with #4.*

- 1) Submit plans for **plan review** with P&DS staff and get a **building permit**
  - For requirements: see “General, Building...Permits” application (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>)
  - For fees: <http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/documents/ScheduleofDevFees-REVISED9-01-12.pdf> and [www.alamoheightsfire.com](http://www.alamoheightsfire.com) (for Fire Department permits)
  - Timeline: 10-21 business days review time for commercial plans; may require **Design Review** of Architectural Review Board and City Council which extends this timeline (see FAQs on page 3)
- 2) Are you **requesting a new address or suite number**?
  - Process: Tenant provides a written address change request to P&DS staff; City departments review/approve the request; P&DS staff notifies tenant when letter is ready for pick up; tenant takes to Bexar County for recording and submits five copies back to P&DS once recorded so new address can be distributed to Utility Billing, Finance, Police and Fire Departments; the new address can then be used for permitting and other City services, which can be beneficial to the tenant and property owner if the correct address is used throughout the plan review and permitting processes
- 3) Schedule **construction-related inspection(s)**:
  - (210) 826-0516; select “inspection” option in main menu; inspections scheduled before 5 pm take place next business day; inspections won’t be scheduled if a fee is due on the permit for reinspection fees, etc. (for electrical, plumbing, building permits, etc.)
  - “Building Final” inspection may be scheduled along with C of O inspections
- 4) Apply for **Certificate of Occupancy** with P&DS staff
  - See application for information, requirements and fees (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>, ‘Certificate of Occupancy’)
  - Submit application to City offices and pay the applicable fee
- 5) Are you a **restaurant**?
  - Apply for a **Food Establishment Permit and/or Alcohol License(s)** (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>).
- 6) Schedule **Certificate of Occupancy inspection(s)**:
  - (210) 826-0516, select “inspection” option in main menu; inspections scheduled before 5 pm take place next business day; “Health” and/or “Fire C of O” inspections won’t be scheduled if the “Building Final” inspection (if doing construction/remodeling work) has not passed and/or if a fee is due
  - P&DS staff schedules Fire, Health and Building C of O inspections once a “C of O inspection” is requested
  - Fire Dept goes out typically the next business day after a C of O inspection is requested
  - “Building C of O” inspection takes place typically on the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day after C of O inspection is requested
- 7) Are you installing **permanent signage** on the building, awning, glass, door, etc.?
  - Please refer to “Sign Regulations” in Alamo Heights municipal code at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com), Chapter 15 – SIGN REGULATIONS”
  - No permit required for certain signs exempted in Chapter 15 – SIGN REGULATIONS, [Sec. 15-64](#)
  - Before installing any permanent sign, they are to be reviewed by P&DS and **Architectural Review Board (ARB)** and require a **permit(s)**. ARB meets once per month. Application, submittal items, packet quantities, digital items packaged on a CD, and fees are to be submitted by specific ARB deadlines
    - i. Deadlines: refer to Boards and Commission Project Review Calendars (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>) for deadlines and required submittal items
    - ii. Fee(s): refer to Chapter 15 – SIGN REGULATIONS Article III – PERMITS, Sec. 15-62
    - iii. Complete a ‘Board and Commission Application’ for ‘Sign review’ (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php> or available in City offices)
    - iv. **What does the ARB review?** Location, design, scale, size, material, color, lighting and aesthetic appeal. Refer to Chapter 15 – SIGN REGULATIONS Article III – PERMITS, Sec. 15-60
  - Need a sign up faster than Architectural Review Board can review/approve? Please refer to temporary signs in Chapter 15 – SIGN REGULATIONS Article II – SIGN REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS, [Sec. 15-38](#)

**FAQs:**

- 1) Can I open my business if my Certificate of Occupancy inspections have not passed?
  - a. No. You must also pass your 'Building Final' inspection if doing construction/remodeling work.
- 2) What are the permitted construction hours in the City of Alamo Heights?
  - a. See "Authorized Hours of Construction" handout for hours and exemptions (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>) or refer to Chapter 5 – Buildings and Building Regulations – of the municipal code at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) (Article I – General; Sec. 5-6).
- 3) When do I get my Certificate of Occupancy?
  - a. Once the C of O inspection has been approved, staff mails the issued C of O to your business address.
- 4) What do I submit to get a temporary sign permit?
  - a. Application (see "General, Building...Permits" application (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>))
  - b. Proposed sign specifications/graphics (include color, text, dimensions, etc.)
  - c. Fee(s) (\$125 for the temporary sign permit fee; contractor registration fee may be in addition to permit fee if registration has either expired or if not already registered with City of Alamo Heights; <http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/documents/ScheduleofDevFees-REVISED9-01-12.pdf>)
- 5) Do I need to post the Certificate of Occupancy on my wall, desk, etc?
  - a. While it is not required by the City of Alamo Heights, it is recommended that you post it for public visibility. It is required to be accessible for any inspections conducted by City officials.
- 6) When is Design Review of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) and City Council required?
  - a. For addition/alteration(s) to an existing structure with a construction cost > \$50,000 (multi-family or commercial only)
  - b. See also [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com) (Part II – Code of Ordinances, Chapter 5 – Buildings and Building Regulations, Article IV – Permit Regulations, Sec. 5-54 and Article IX – Demolition, Sec. 5-134)
- 7) What information do I submit for each Board/Commission (and 'Design Review') and how many copies?
  - a. Procedures: refer to the 'Demolition Review Procedures Packet' (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php> or available in City offices)
  - b. Deadlines: refer to Boards and Commission Project Review Calendars (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>) for deadlines and required submittal items
  - c. Fee(s): refer to <http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/documents/ScheduleofDevFees-REVISED9-01-12.pdf>
  - d. Complete a 'Board and Commission Application' (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>)
- 8) What deadlines do I need to meet for the upcoming Board/Commission meeting(s)?
  - a. Refer to the Boards and Commission Project Review Calendars on the City's website (<http://www.alamoheightstx.gov/cityservices/cityservices-development-services-online-resources.php>) for deadlines and required submittal items or contact P&DS staff for information.
- 9) What does the Architectural Review Board (ARB) review?
  - a. Refer to Chapter 2 – Administration, Article III – Boards & Commissions – of the municipal code at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).
- 10) What does the Board of Adjustment (BOA) review?
  - a. Refer to Chapter 2 – Administration, Article III – Boards & Commissions – of the municipal code at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).
- 11) What does the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) review?
  - a. Refer to Chapter 2 – Administration, Article III – Boards & Commissions – of the municipal code at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com).