Building Guide

A guide to getting started on your next building project

Development Services

700 Main Center Suite 115

Victoria, TX 77901
# Table of Contents

**Contacts** ........................................................................................................ 5

**Helpful Numbers** .......................................................................................... 6

**Building Permits** ......................................................................................... 7-10
  Why a building permit is required ............................................................. 7
  Work which does not require a building permit ...................................... 7
  Who can pull a permit ............................................................................. 8
  How to apply for a permit .................................................................... 9

**Lot Grading Requirements** ......................................................................... 11-12
  Single & Two Family Residential .......................................................... 11
  Multi-family Residential, Commercial, & Industrial ............................. 11

**Inspections** .................................................................................................. 13-14
  How to call for an inspection ................................................................ 13-14

**Moving Permit** ............................................................................................ 15-16
  Process for receiving a house (structure) moving permit ... 15-16

**Manufactured Homes** .................................................................................. 17-18
  Placement Permit ..................................................................................... 17
  Placement on a private lot ...................................................................... 18
  Placement in a manufactured home park .............................................. 18

**Utilities** ........................................................................................................ 19
  Obtaining a water and sewer service account ...................................... 19

**The Development Center** ........................................................................... 20-21
  Commercial permits .......................................................................... 20
  Site Plan ................................................................................................. 21
Table of Contents

Fees ........................................................................................................................................ 22
Residential ............................................................................................................................ 22
Commercial ......................................................................................................................... 22
Codes ..................................................................................................................................... 23
Current Codes ..................................................................................................................... 23
Additional Regulations ....................................................................................................... 24
Additional Regulations ....................................................................................................... 24
Platting ................................................................................................................................... 25
What is a plat ......................................................................................................................... 25
When a plat is required ......................................................................................................... 25
Types of plats ....................................................................................................................... 25
Fencing .................................................................................................................................... 26
Fences ................................................................................................................................. 26
Barbed Wire Fences ............................................................................................................ 26
Fire Self Inspection Form ..................................................................................................... 27-32
Floodplain ............................................................................................................................ 33-34
Floodplain ............................................................................................................................ 33-34
How to determine if your property is in the floodplain .................................................. 34
Certificate of Occupancy .................................................................................................... 35
What is required before the building can be occupied ..................................................... 35
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For questions regarding Building Permits or any other Development Related questions please contact one of our knowledgeable Development Specialists at:
361-485-3320

Additional Information can be found on our website:
http://victoriatx.org/departments/development-services/development-center-
Helpful Numbers

City Secretary................................................................. 361-485-3040
Code Enforcement ............................................................. 361-485-3330
Fire Marshalls Office ....................................................... 361-485-3460
Health Department............................................................. 361-578-6281
Parks & Recreation............................................................. 361-485-3200
Public Works (Streets) ...................................................... 361-485-3160
Public Works (Water– Waste Water) ................................. 351-485-3380
Sherriff’s Office ............................................................... 361-575-0651
Solid Waste ........................................................................ 361-485-3220
Utility Billing Office.............................................................. 361-485-3400
Victoria County Clerk’s Office ........................................... 361-575-1478
Victoria Library ................................................................. 361-485-3304
Building Permits

Why a building permit is required:

A building permit is used as a tool to help enforce the requirements of the various codes and ordinances that have been adopted by the City of Victoria. These codes and ordinances are intended to protect a user of a building from the danger of fire, structural collapse, electrocution, unhealthy conditions and other similar dangerous circumstances. These ordinances also ensure that the property is developed in a way that will provide adequate parking and landscaping on the lot, as well as access to the building for emergency services.

For questions regarding building permits, please visit our website at http://victoriatx.org/developmentcenter or contact a Development Specialist at 361-485-3320.

Work which does not require a building permit:

Certain work does not require a building permit, such as:

- Repainting.
- Replacing wallpaper.
- Replacing carpet.
- Repairs to less than 50% of the total roofing, sheetrock, or siding.
- Certain minor electrical work.
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures such as sinks or commodes.

Please contact the Development Center at 361-485-3320 to discuss any changes you plan to make in your building or its systems to determine if a permit will be necessary.
Building Permits

Who can pull a permit:

Homestead owner permit- You may apply for a homestead owner’s permit to perform work on your residence if:

- You reside at the residence; and
- Have registered it as your Homestead with the County Appraisal District

Licensed Professional- If you do not qualify for the homestead owner’s permit you will need to apply for a contractor’s license from the City of Victoria. This license is $200.00 per year and issued by the Development Services Department. You will need a copy of your driver’s license when submitting your application.

The development services department recognizes the following:

- Master Electrician & Electrical Contractor (State) both required.
- Master Mechanical License
- Master Plumber License
How to apply for a permit:

In order to obtain a building permit you must submit a completed permit application form and building plans to the Development Services Department. If the project is a new commercial or multi-family residential project, a site plan must be submitted and approved prior to receiving a building permit.

If you are requesting a permit for a new building, an addition to an existing building, or a major remodel of an existing building, you will need to submit the following information:

- Scaled plot plan drawing showing property lines, easements, and the location of every existing building (See Figure 1).
- Detailed floor plans including the general layout of mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems. (See Figure 1)
- Elevation of front and one other side.
- Foundation plan (See Figure 2).
- Plans and specifications showing a structural wall detail listing the types of materials used for the walls, floors, ceilings and roof. (See Figure 2)
- Boundary line survey may required by a surveyor or engineer when a reasonable question exists as to the location of a property line.
Building Permits

Figure 1: Plot Plan and Floor Plan:

![Plot Plan](image1)

![Floor Plan](image2)

Figure 2: Foundation and Wall Plans:

![Wall Section](image3)

![Foundation Plan](image4)
Lot Grading Requirements

Single & Two Family Residential

All single-family lot shall be graded so that the finished floor elevation of habitable portions of the house shall be a minimum of (See figure 3 for more details):

- 30” above the gutter for curb and gutter streets.
- 24” above the center line of the street of open road sections.
- 12” above the base flood elevation for slab on grade or
- 12” above the base flood elevation to the lowest girder or floor joist for pier and beam, and lowest horizontal structural member of a manufactured home chassis; whichever is greater.

Multi-family Residential, Commercial & Industrial

All multi-family, commercial and industrial lots shall be graded to provide positive drainage away from buildings and towards streets and/or storm drainage facilities. In all cases, the finished floor of any structure shall be a minimum of (See figure 3 for more details):

- 20” above the gutter for curb and gutter streets,
- 12” above the center line of the street for open road sections
- 12” above the base flood elevation for slab on grade or
- 12” above the base flood elevation to the lowest girder or floor joist for pier and beam or lowest horizontal structural member of a manufactured building chassis; whichever is greatest.

Any exceptions must be approved by the City Engineer

Complete data calculations justifying the exception must be submitted by a Licensed Professional Engineer before it will be considered. Lot grading shall not block drainage from adjacent property.
Lot Grading Requirements

Figure 3: Lot Grading Details

[Diagram showing Lot Grading Details with sections for different types of grading and slope requirements.]
Inspections

How to call for an Inspection

Inspections may be requested by calling the 24-hour inspection number at 361-485-3333. Below are the typical inspections (Not necessarily performed in this order):

- **Electrical** Construction Loop (T-Pole).
- **Underground Plumbing/ Gas & Electrical Rough-In.**
  - Before back-filling trench.
  - Sewer lines shall be inspected full of water.
- **Foundation/ Slab** (when rebar is in place, but before pouring concrete).
- **Floor Framing** (Before floor decking).
- **Framing** (with windows, wind bracing, roofing, electrical, plumbing & mechanical installed, but before insulation).
  - Do not remove labels from windows.
  - Heat- Vent-A/C Rough-In- (unit set with duct work complete)
  - Electrical Rough-In- (wires in place, panel complete minus breakers preferred, switches and outlets up minus the device preferred.
- **Plumbing Top Out.**
- **Vents through roof.**
- **Electrical Rough-In** (wires in place, panel complete minus breakers preferred, switches and outlets made up minus the device preferred).
- **Wall Insulation and Air-Leakage Caulking.**
- **Gas Line Pressure Test** (with valves installed and no appliances connected).
Inspections

- **Electrical-Temporary Power** (when changing from T-Pole to house connection after lights/ plugs/ switched/ breaker box complete).

- **Plumbing-Temporary Gas** (after appliances connected and vented)

- **Driveway Approach & Sidewalk** (when rebar is in place before pouring concrete).

- **Final Inspection For Permanent Utilities & Certificate of Occupancy.**
  
  - When building is completely finished, ready to occupy, but before any furniture or owners move in. Finish trim, paint, carpet and tile do not need to be installed for a final inspection.
    
    - Plumbing Final
    - Heating & A/C Final
    - Electrical Final
    - Building Final
  
  - Duct Test- Form provided by HVAC contractor
  
  - Blower Door Test- Form provided by third party
Moving Permit

Process for receiving a house (structure) moving permit

All moving permits require at least 48 hours notice before the requested move time.

Submit application with:

- Current location, address, and destination address
- Owner’s information (name, address, and phone number)
- Contractor moving the structure information (name, address, phone number, and license number)
- Proposed date and time**

**Moves are not allowed during peak traffic hours of 7am-9am, 12pm-1pm, and no later than 4pm**

Routes will be determined and approved by the City of Victoria Traffic Control Division

After a route is approved by the City of Victoria Traffic Control, the Applicant/Contractor will provide an approval letter from private utility companies:

- AEP 361-514-2278
- AT&T Telephone 1-800-485-1160
- Suddenlink 361-573-6301
- Victoria Electric Co-Op 361-573-2428
If a portion of the route is on a State Maintained Road then a TxDOT permit will also be required. Call 361-573-9251 or email via www.dot.state.tx.us for assistance.

Once the contractor brings letters from any applicable utility companies the permit can be issued. All fees associated with the permit will be collected at this time.

When the permit is issued a copy must be posted on the structure to be moved.

Fees Schedule:

- Moving Permit- $80.00
- Escort- $60.00
- Traffic Control Devices (signs/lights) to be moved $50.00 each.

A $70.00 Re-Inspection fee is due if the structure is not ready at the appointed time. If two consecutive move times are missed, all paid fees and permit costs are forfeited and the permit will be considered VOID.
Manufactured Homes

All manufactured homes placed in the City of Victoria must be manufactured after June 15, 1976 and have a valid HUD code number.

Placement permit

A permit is required for placement of a manufactured home in a manufactured home park or on private property.

- No new placements will be allowed in the designated Historic Districts.

The following information is required to complete an application for a placement permit:

- Placement address
- Applicants/Owner’s information (name, current address, and phone number
- Manufactured home seller’s information (name, address, and phone number
- Manufactured home installer’s information (name, address, phone number, and state license number
- Year manufactured
- Length, and width of structure when fully assembled
- Name of manufacturer
- Texas Certification (HUD) Number
- Electrical service capacity
- Valuation of the manufactured home
- An engineer is required if placement is in the flood plain
Manufactured Homes

Placement on a private lot

- **Deed**: The property applicant/owner must submit proof of ownership by submitting a copy of the property deed for the lot the manufactured home is to be placed on. (This deed cannot be a lease, contract for sale or deed of trust) The deed must have the legal description of the lot. The applicant/owner’s name must be the same as the grantee’s name.

- **Platting**: Placements on a private lot will require a separately platted lot. Contact Development Services for platting determination and information. If platting is required, a placement permit cannot be issued until platting has been completed.

- **Off-Street parking**: Two (2) off-street parking spaces, either 20’X20’ or 10’X40’, a driveway ramp, and sidewalks meeting City of Victoria specifications must be constructed.

- **Electrical and plumbing**: A licensed electrician and a licensed plumber will need to obtain permits for their work.

- **Water and sewer taps**: Water and sanitary sewer tap fees must be paid if there are not existing taps on the lot.

- **Flood plain**: If the lot is located in the flood plain, special conditions will apply. Contact Development Services for help with flood plain determination.

Placement in a manufactured home park

- **A placement permit is required for the placement of a manufactured home in a manufactured home park.**

- **Electrical and plumbing**: A licensed electrician and a licensed plumber will need to obtain permits for their work.
Obtaining a water and sewer service account

- If the customer has had water and sewer service with the City since 2001, they can call the Utility Billing Office (UBO) to set up a billing account.

- If the customer has not had service with the City of Victoria they will need to go to the Utility Billing Office at 700 Main Center to set up an account.

- Customers can fill out a new service application from UBO at the time of payment for water and sewer taps.
The Development Center

The Development Center is the customer service hub of the Development Services department. It manages all phases of the development review process, including the approval of subdivision plats and site plans and the issuance of building permits. Staff is responsible for building plan review, conducting building inspections, floodplain management and other engineering issues related to development.

Commercial

For commercial building permits, the following items are required:

- Three copies of scaled plans and specifications the minimum size accepted plan is 18"X24";
- If the proposed building is over 5,000 sq. ft., 2 stories in height, or has a structural span of more than 24’ or is a special occupancy (assembly, educational, or Institutional), then the plans must be prepared by an engineer or architect. Plan check forms are also required to be filled out by the engineer or architect;
- Electrical plans- power and lighting;
- Mechanical plans- HVAC;
- Plumbing plans- Including size and location of all new water and sewer lines from the building to the City mains;
- When applying for a permit for a tenant finish out, the contractor will need to submit floor plans, building specifications and electrical, mechanical and plumbing plans; and
- All new commercial permit applications shall be accompanied by a plan review fee.

The permitting of single family and small commercial projects normally can be processed by a cursory review providing your application and plans are in order. On larger and more complex building projects it will take longer. You will be called when the permit is ready to issue, or so that we can inform you of any corrections or problems that may have developed.
Site Plan

A Site plan will be required for:

- Any new commercial, industrial, other non-residential, multiple family, townhouse, or manufactured home park Development.

- The construction of any new off-street parking, loading, or storage facility; the expansion of any existing off-street parking, loading, or storage facility; or the surfacing of any existing unpaved off-street parking, loading, or storage facility.

Generally site plans must address the following concerns:

- Required Easements
- Parking
- Landscaping
- Sidewalks
- Topography
- Fences (when applicable)
- Dumpster Enclosures

The Development Services Department will coordinate the review of your plans with the Fire Marshall, Pretreatment, and the Department of Public Works.

The Development Services Department is located at:
700 Main Center - Suite 122
Victoria, TX 77901

361-485-3320 - Phone
361-485-3326 - Fax
Fees

Residential

Plan review for one- and two- family residential (R-3) construction and remodeling are optional. However, when such plan review services are requested by a permit application, the plan review fee shall be $100.00. Such plan review fee is in addition to the building permit fee.

Commercial

Plan review fee for building activity other than one- and two family residential (R-3) construction and remodeling shall be twenty-five(25) percent of the estimated building permit fee payable at the time of application submittal. Such plan review fee shall apply when the permit value is $50,000 or greater.

For a complete list of Fees see our website

http://www.victoriatx.org/departments/development-services/development-center-

Additionally, The City of Victoria has a Permit Fee Calculator located on the Development Center website that can assist in determining the correct fee amount for your job.
Codes

Current Codes

Currently adopted codes are listed on the City of Victoria website:

http://victoriatx.org/departments/development-services/development-center-/adopted-codes-and-ordinances

2015 International Building Code
2015 International Existing Building Code
2015 International Residential Code
2015 International Fire Code
2015 International Mechanical Code
2014 National Electrical Code
2015 International Plumbing Code
2015 International Fuel Gas Code
2015 International Energy Conservation Code
2015 International Property Maintenance Code
Additional Regulations

The building permit must be posted at the job site and the approved plans shall accompany the permit.

The building permit authorizes the work to be done by the General Contractor only; electrical, plumbing, and mechanical contractors are required to make separate application for each permit prior to starting any work or job.

Contractors installing landscape irrigation systems, building swimming pools and spas, erecting signs, moving or demolition and others doing similar work must also have separate permits before they begin their jobs.

If work is to be done in the public right-of-way, applicants must first consult with the Development Services Department.

All storm sewer system regulations must be adhered to during the construction process. Contractors, operators, and owners shall use best management practices to reduce the discharge of MS$ and waters of the state, of sediment, silt, earth, soil, and other materials associated with grading, excavation, and any other construction activities to the maximum extent practicable.
Platting

What is a plat

A Plat is a survey of property that describes the dimensions and location of lot lines, streets and easements. A plat establishes the lot, block and subdivision name used in real estate transactions. Plats must be prepared by a licensed land surveyor or civil engineer. A plat is not the property survey required by mortgage companies when closing on the sale of property.

When a plat is required

If your property has never been platted and you wish to build or place a Manufactured Home or new structure on your property.

If you are selling a portion of your property, you must have a plat showing all the property you own and how you intend to divide it.

If your property has never been platted and you wish to expand an existing structure that results in increasing the gross floor area by 25% or more.

Types of plats

A Minor Plat is created whenever a tract of land is to be platted, subdivided, or resubdivided into four (4) or fewer lots, and public infrastructure improvements are not required.

A Major Plat is created whenever a tract of land is to be platted, subdivided, or resubdivided into five (5) or more lots, or whenever the subdivision of land requires the construction of public infrastructure.
Fencing

Fences

Fences are allowed in any residential yard along the property line; provided that no opaque fence or wall exceeds eight (8) feet in height. Fences which extend beyond the front of a building shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. On corner lots, fences shall not encroach on the front or exterior side of the building lines.

Fences which extend beyond the front of a building must provide an eight foot transition between the eight (8) foot and three (3) foot sections of the fence. Such five (5) foot transition section shall begin at the minimum required setback line. For existing subdivisions which do not have platted building setback lines, a twenty (20) foot setback shall apply for this purpose.

Generally fences do not require a permit. All fences must be located on private property, out of the “sight-triangle” and out of the public right-of-way. Fences made out of masonry or having electrical components require a permit.

Barbed Wire Fences

Barbed wire fences are not allowed on or around property; except under the following conditions:

- Up to three (3) strands on top of a six (6) foot (or taller) high security type fence on a non-residential uses, provided the barbed wire is upright or projecting over the owner’s property and not over abutting property.

- Properties with an agricultural exemption of five (5) acres or greater.
Fire Self Inspection
Form

The following is a self-checklist to prepare your business for a Fire Inspection. These are the items and concerns that will be addressed by the Fire Department prior to approval for you to receive your Certificate of Occupancy.

Access & Premises

- Are address numbers for the building clearly visible from the street? (front and rear doors)
- Is the exterior fire department access unobstructed
- Is combustible vegetation removed so as to not create a fire hazard?
- Is there maintained a minimum 3’ clearance around fire hydrants?

Egress (Exiting)

- Are exit ways and doors easily recognizable, unobstructed, and maintained functional?
- If the main exit door is provided with key-locking hardware as allowed by code, is there a sign above the door that states “THIS DOOR MUST REMAIN UNLOCKED WHEN BUILDING IS OCCUPIED” and are other exit doors openable from the inside without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort?
- Are the exits and exit enclosures free from the storage of combustible materials?
- Are doors with self-closing hinges maintained in the closed position (not blocked open)?
Fire Self Inspection Form

Electrical

• Electrical outlets, switches and junction boxes properly covered with cover plats and is system safe from any apparent shock and/or other electrical hazards?

• Are circuit breakers/fuses labeled to identify the protected area?

• Is the area maintained clear at least 30” in front of electrical panel(s)?

• Are extension cords used only for temporary use?

• If multiple items need to be plugged in, is a power tap utilized with a built-in circuit breaker and is the power tap plugged directly into a permanent receptacle?

Emergency Lighting/ Egress Illumination

• Is the means of egress illuminated when the building or structure is occupied?

Exit Signs

• If exit signs are required, are they maintained illuminated or self-luminous?

• Does the backup-batter work?

Fire Alarm System

• If the building is equipped with a fire alarm system, has the required annual been performed by a qualified fire alarm company?
Fire Self Inspection Form

Fire Safety & Evacuation Plans

- If fire drills are required, are they conducted successfully at varying times and under varying conditions?
- Are records maintained on the premises?
- If required, are evacuation plans posted?
- If required, do you have fire safety plans?

Fire Extinguishers

- Is there access to fire extinguisher(s) rated at a minimum 2A-10BC?
- Is the travel distance from all portions of the building less than 75 feet to a fire extinguisher?
- Are all fire extinguishers visible and accessible (not blocked)?
- Have the fire extinguisher(s) been serviced/tagged by a qualified company within the last 12 months?
- Signs posted above fire extinguisher?
- Are the extinguisher(s) properly mounted? (Proper locations near exit doors where possible, not exceeding maximum travel distance, properly mounted (maximum 5’ high if <40 lbs., maximum 3.5’ high if >40 lbs. In all cases, minimum 4” above the ground).

Fire/Smoke Separations

Are the fire/smoke separations (smoke doors, fire doors, walls, etc.) maintained/working condition?
Fire Self Inspection Form

Fire Suppression Systems

• Is the top of storage maintained a minimum 18” below head deflectors in fire sprinkled areas?

• If the building is equipped with a fire sprinkler system, has the required annual service of the fire sprinkler system been performed in the last year by a qualified sprinkler company?

• In commercial cooking applications, has hood suppression system been service in the last six months and is the hood cleaned to prevent the accumulation of grease?

Heat Producing Appliances

• If portable electric heaters are used, are they used safely?

• Are they plugged directly into wall outlets and kept a minimum of 3’ away from combustibles?

• Open flame unvented heaters are prohibited in a commercial occupancy.

• Is the clearance between ignition sources, such as light fixtures, heater, and flame producing devices, and combustible storage maintained in an approved manner?

Housekeeping and Decorations

• Is combustible rubbish that is stored in containers outside of vaults or rooms removed from the building a minimum of once each working day?

• Are oily rages or similar materials stored in metal, metal-lined or other approved containers equipped with tight-fitting covers?

• Are combustible decorations flame retardant?
Fire Self Inspection Form

Mechanical Hazards

- Is the venting for exhaust products of combustion intact for gas appliances (ex. Water heaters, furnaces)?
- Are safe clearances maintained between gas fired appliances and combustible materials?

Smoke Detectors

- If smoke detection is required in common areas such as corridors or part of the fire alarm system have they been tested in the last year by a qualified service company?

Storage of Combustibles

- Is the storage of combustible materials orderly?
- Are combustible materials not stored beneath the building or structure?
- Are the boiler rooms, mechanical rooms and electrical panel rooms maintained without the storage of any combustible materials within?
- Are rubbish containers over 5 1/3 cubic feet (40 gallons) provided with lids and made of noncombustible construction?
- Are dumpsters that are 1.5 cubic yards or more not stored inside the building and placed more than 5’ from combustible walls, openings or combustible roof eave lines?
- Storage must be below 24” of the ceiling level.

Storage of Compressed Gas Cylinders

- If you have compressed gas containers (such as CO2, helium, etc.) are they chained to prevent falling?
Fire Self Inspection Form

Storage of Combustible and Flammable Liquids

- Are quantities in excess of 10 gallons of flammable and combustible liquid used for maintenance purposes and the operation of equipment stored in liquid storage cabinets?

A NO response to any of these questions indicates the presence of a fire code violation.
Floodplain

The City of Victoria participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with the adoption and enforcement of a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) develops and provides to participating communities floodplain maps that identify areas that are at risk of flooding during a 1% chance flood (commonly referred to as the 100 year flood). The floodplain is the dark shaded area shown on the FEMA Floodplain Maps. As an NFIP participating community, flood insurance is available to all residence of the community and is underwritten by the NFIP program.

Victoria regulates the floodplain development to:

- Protect people and property
- Ensure that Federal flood insurance & disaster assistance are available
- Save tax dollars
- Reduce future flood losses

Most manmade changes to land in the floodplain require a permit.

Examples include:

- Constructing new buildings (including temporary or agricultural)
- Additions to existing buildings
- Substantial improvements to existing buildings (including interior renovation)
- Repair of substantially damaged buildings
- Placement of manufactured (mobile) homes
- Parking or storage of recreational vehicles
Floodplain

- Storing materials, including gas/liquid tanks
- Placement of fill, grading, excavation, mining and dredging
- Oil and gas drilling

Most improvements in the floodplain require the services of a Texas Licensed Professional Engineer or Surveyor. These services are not provided by City Staff.

How to determine if your property is in the floodplain

Information to determine if your property is located in the floodplain can be found:

Free

- Online at the FEMA Map Service Center
- Viewing the Maps at the Victoria Public Library
- Viewing the Maps in the Development Service Center

Nominal Fee

- A Floodplain Information Letter from the Development Service Center
Certificate of Occupancy

What is required before the building can be occupied

Before the building can be occupied, utilities released in the name of the owner or tenant, and business conducted, the following inspections must be approved by a Certificate of Approval.

- Final Building Inspection
- Final Electrical Inspection
- Final Mechanical Inspection
- Final Plumbing Inspection
- Final Department of Public Works
- Final Health Inspection (where applicable)
- Final Fire Marshal (see fire self inspection form on pages 27-32)

Once the final inspections have been requested and approved, the general contractor or a member of their staff may come by the Development Services Department for the Certificate of Occupancy, or if requested by phone it can be mailed or faxed.

Please keep in mind that final inspections can be a time-consuming process for everyone involved and in order to assist you in your deadline, may we suggest you start your scheduling as soon as possible. Permanent electrical power cannot be turned on in the owner or tenant's name without a Certificate of Occupancy. Copies of these Certificates are faxed to the local electrical supplier (AEP or VEC) as soon as they are signed. If any corrections are found during the final inspections, additional time may be required for re-inspection. This could cause a delay in issuing the Certificate of Occupancy.