

## Permits and Licensing

With numerous city and state rules and regulations it can be difficult to understand which permits or licenses you need to start your business. To streamline permitting the permitting process, New Bedford conducts weekly "First Stop" meetings which give citizens seeking a permit the opportunity to receive advice from relevant department representatives at the start of the process. Each citizen is allowed 20 minutes to present their project and ask questions.

### Some Tips on Applying for Permits

- **Start Early.** Prepare your application well in advance of the date you wish to start any activity that may require a license; it can take time to get a license approved, especially if you need a permit that requires inspections or approval from multiple city departments (e.g., Consumer Affairs, Buildings, Fire, or Transportation) or qualifying exams.
- **Take Steps in the Right Order.** Knowing what is required to obtain the permit will save you time and aggravation. For example, know what documents you will need to submit with the application and prepare them in advance. If the permit you need requires multiple agency approval or both City and State approval, you should get them in the order indicated.
- **Know the Rules.** It is not enough to get a permit. You need to be informed about what you can and cannot do under the regulation or law because, even if you don't know the rules, inspectors do. If you have questions, call the relevant agency and ask. Don't ignore fines. Seek help.

These are the key city agencies that issue permits. For more detailed information, use the websites or phone numbers provided.

Contact the Building Department and determine which building permits or certificates you may need.

Commissioner  
Building Department  
Inspectional Services Division  
New Bedford City Hall, Room 308  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 979-1540

If you are placing any new building signs or changing existing ones, contact the Building Department. Any freestanding signage will have to be approved by the City Planner:

Department of Planning  
New Bedford City Hall, Room 303  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-979-1488

If you are within one hundred feet of a "wetland resource area", you may need to file a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission in order to move forward with your project. For more information on what constitutes a "wetland resource area" or whether you need to file a Notice of Intent, contact the Conservation Commission:

Conservation Commission  
Department of Environmental Stewardship  
133 William Street, Room 311  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 991-6188

You may need a license for your business. Check with the City of New Bedford Licensing Board:

133 William Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 979-1457 Fax: (508) 991-6148

*Sources: New York City Business Solutions; Navigating through Regulations and Licensing Requirements: A Guide for Entrepreneurs in New Bedford in Twenty Occupations, Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research.*