



DIVISION OF
PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS
Office of the Fire Marshal

MEMORANDUM

TO: Customers and Contractors

FROM: Becky Gander, Chief of Permitting

DATE: July 29, 2026

SUBJECT: Fire Process – Public Use

General Information

- Reviews and Inspections by the County - effective July 1, 2025
- Building permits (commercial or residential) that are applied for prior to July 1st or later, the county will handle the reviews and inspections unless it falls under the State Fire Marshal purview as stated in the MOU (see below)
- **State Fire Marshal's office will continue to do the plan review and inspections for the following permits:**
 - Educational Facilities K-12 only
 - College facilities will be done at the county level
 - New and existing CMS-certified health care and ambulatory health care facilities
 - Does not include: Doctor's offices for Meritus, Robinwood, etc., these are a county fire review
 - State-licensed day care facilities, as defined by the State Fire Prevention Code
 - New and existing state-owned properties
 - New and existing facilities and properties requiring a state license to operate
 - Does not include: Massage Parlors, Beauty Parlors, Nail Salons, Restaurants or Food Service Facilities including Mobile Food Units, these are a county fire review
 - All public fireworks displays, and consumer fireworks retail facilities and properties
- Sprinkler and Alarm permits should be applied for online except for those applicants who do not have the means or resources to do so.
- Paper applications are available for applicants who do not have access to apply online and can be obtained from the permitting website at <https://www.washco-md.net/document-repository/>

- Fees are in accordance with the fee schedule adopted by the county commissioners and a copy can be obtained online at <https://www.washco-md.net/permits-and-inspections/>
 - Fees are to be assessed whenever a fire review or inspection is necessary unless it falls within the guidelines of the Fee Waiver Policy.
 - When there is no square footage to assess for plan review, the Life Safety Miscellaneous fee of \$200 will apply
 - A fire review fee and initial inspection fee are to be charged on all fire permits unless noted otherwise below
 - Revisions to an approved fire permit will be charged as follows:
 - \$120 for residential (Life Safety Final)
 - \$200 for non-residential (Life Safety Misc)

Sprinkler and Fire Suppression Permit

General Information

- Sprinklers are not required for an addition if there are no sprinklers in the existing dwelling, unless the addition is to be used as a dwelling unit
- Building Permits will not be held up pending approval of the Sprinkler Permit
- Fire Suppression systems are for non-residential projects that usually involve a kitchen hood but not always
 - New/replacement hoods also require a building permit and a mechanical permit. The fire permit will not be issued until the building and mechanical permit have been applied for
 - Fees will be the same as a sprinkler system except for hoods as noted below under the Fee section

Permit

- **Documents**
 - Make sure the sprinkler plans have been uploaded correctly.
 - Non-Residential plans must be sealed. A NICET stamp is sufficient. Does not need to be sealed by a licensed professional
 - Residential plans for apartments, condos and townhomes must be sealed
 - Residential plans for single family dwellings do not need to be sealed
 - Modular and Mobile Homes must have approval from the State of Maryland and upload a copy of the sprinkler system that was installed

- **Fees**
 - Residential
 - Plan review fee - \$.10/sq. ft.
 - Inspection fee - \$50
 - Non-Residential
 - Plan review fee - \$.15/sq. ft.
 - Plan review fee for Storage/Warehouse - \$.10/sq. ft.
 - Inspection fee - \$150
 - Hood
 - Life Safety fee - \$200
 - Extinguishing System fee - \$150
- **Professional**
 - All sprinkler permits must have a licensed sprinkler contractor associated with the permit. You can verify the license at:
<https://mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal/Pages/SprinklerContractors.aspx>
- **Issuance**
 - Sprinkler permit can be issued ahead of the building permit

Alarm Permit

General Information

- Alarm Permits are for non-residential purposes and are required whenever a new alarm system is being installed or when repairs/modifications are being made to an existing system. If the alarm plans are included in the building plans, a separate fire permit is not required.
- Alarm Permits will also require an electrical permit for low voltage prior to issuance of the alarm permit.
- All fees for the electrical permit **and** alarm permit must be paid before either permit is issued. Electrical permits will only be issued once the alarm permit is issued. They will not be issued before the alarm permit.
- When the electrical permit is tied to a building permit, it must include the scope of work for the alarm system, if the same contractor is doing the work. Otherwise, a separate electrical permit will be required.

Permit Intake

- **Documents**
 - Make sure the alarm plans have been uploaded correctly.
 - Plans do not need to be sealed
- **Fees**
 - Life Safety fee- \$200
 - Alarm Inspection fee - \$150

- **Professional**
 - All alarm permits must have a licensed contractor associated with the permit. It can either be a NICET license or a Washington County Master or Low Voltage Electrical License/Registration
 - For electrical license/registration, applicants must apply for that license in accordance with the Electrical Board Rules and Regulations.
- **Issuance**
 - Alarm permit can be issued ahead of the building permit provided the electrical permit has been submitted and all fees paid.

Mobile Food Unit Permit

General Information

- Inspection requests for a mobile food unit will require a fire permit prior to the inspection being completed.
 - Inspections must be completed prior to the event
 - Inspections can be completed at the residence of the unit as long as it is located within Washington County
 - For units outside of Washington County, the unit will need to be brought to a centralized location which is the Washington County Ag Center at 7313 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro MD
- A menu of the food that will be served is required as part of the permit submittal

Permit Intake

- **Documents**
 - The only document needed for this permit is a menu of the food being served
- **Fees**
 - No plan review fee required
 - Mobile Food Unit fee of \$120 **per unit** to be charged. This includes the inspection fee.
- **Issuance**
 - Permit can be issued once fees have been paid

Trade Permits

- **Mechanical Permit**
 - Stand-alone non-residential mechanical permits where the system is over 2000 CFM's will require a fire review.
 - Permit will get routed for Fire Review and Mechanical Plan Review

- Fees
 - Life Safety Misc. fee - \$200
 - Life Safety Final fee - \$120
 - Fire fees are in addition to the mechanical permit fees
- **Boilers**
 - Stand-alone non-residential permits for installation of a new boiler will be processed in the same manner as it currently is. A Fire Review is not required to issue the permit.
 - This will be inspected by the building inspector. If the inspector sees an issue while performing the inspection, they will let the Fire Plans Examiner know.
 - The Fire Plans Examiner, after discussing it with the inspector, will determine if a fire review and fee are applicable.
- **Plumbing Permit**
 - **Propane Tanks**
 - Permits for non-residential propane tanks will require a site plan showing the proposed location and should show distances from the tank to the structure(s) and property lines
 - Plumbing Plan Review is not required but is subject to field inspection
 - Fire Review will be required for review of the site plan only which should include the size of the tank(s)
 - Fees:
 - Plan Review Fee - Storage Tank fee - \$140
 - Inspection Fee - Outside Storage fee - \$140
 - Fire fees are in addition to the plumbing permit fees
- **Electrical Permit**
 - Electrical permits are required whenever there are modifications to an existing alarm system, or a new alarm system is installed
 - Electrical permits will not be issued prior to the alarm permit except in those cases where the electrical permit is tied to a building permit and includes the scope of work for the alarm.
 - A Fire Review is not required on any electrical plans or electrical permit regardless of the scope of work.
 - Electrical permit fees must be paid in order for the alarm permit to be issued

Inspections

- **General Information**
 - Inspections will be scheduled under the building permit when applicable
 - If there is no building permit required, the inspections will be scheduled under the Fire Permit
 - Inspections may be scheduled up to midnight for the next available business day
 - No same day inspections will be completed

- All inspections are typically completed within 24 hours
- Residential inspections will only include the sprinkler system and will typically be completed by the building inspector/fire inspector
- Commercial inspections will include all life safety aspects of the fire code and will be completed by the Fire Inspector
- Photographs are not permissible
- All inspections will be completed in person by an inspector
- Re-inspection fees will apply to scheduled inspections if the inspector finds the work is not ready upon arrival
 - 1st trip - \$50
 - 2nd trip - \$75
 - 3rd trip - \$100
- Additional inspection fees will not be charged for inspections that require multiple trips
- **Hydro**
 - Insulation is not required to be in place before the hydro inspection
 - Photographs will not be permissible
 - Cold Weather Testing – Has to be a water pressure test in a heated structure
- **Insulation**
 - Tenting insulation must be complete at final inspection only
 - All insulation shall be in accordance with NFPA 13, 13D and 13R

Miscellaneous Notes

- Fire Fees Associated with a Non-Residential Building Permit and/or Zoning Permit
 - Building permits that require fire review will be charged as follows:
 - Plan Review Fee - \$.15/sq. ft.
 - Plan Review Fee – Storage/Warehouse - \$.10/sq. ft.
 - Life Safety Final - \$120
 - When there is no square footage to charge, the Life Safety Miscellaneous Fee of \$200 will apply
 - Zoning permits that require fire review will be charged as follows:
 - Life Safety Miscellaneous Fee - \$200
 - Life Safety Final Fee - \$120
 - These fees are in addition to the Zoning Permit fee
- Fire Pumps require a sprinkler and possibly an alarm permit
 - Fire Plans Examiner will determine if an alarm permit is required
- Kiosks – Valley Mall
 - Life Safety Final Fee of \$120 (RMU or tenant supplied)
 - This fee is in addition to the Zoning Permit fee of \$165

- Code/Design
 - Minimum safety factor is 10% if static pressure is below 90 psi
 - As-builts are not required
 - Any changes to the approved set of plans will require a revision to the permit
 - 2024 NFPA 1 and 101 and referenced codes