



COMMERCIAL PERMITTING 101

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HOUSTON PERMITTING CENTER**



INTRODUCTION

The Houston Permitting Center is home to over 700 City of Houston employees across six departments.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS FROM FISCAL YEAR 2024

862 K
INSPECTIONS COMPLETED



10 K
OPEN RECORDS
REQUESTS
COMPLETED



76 K

IN PERSON
CUSTOMERS
SERVED



34 K

ONLINE CUSTOMERS
SERVED



12 K
311 REQUESTS
CLOSED



703 K
PERMITS
SOLD



374 K
DIGITAL
IMPRESSIONS |
REACH



87 K

PLAN REVIEWS
COMPLETED



4 AVERAGE
REVIEW
CYCLES
FOR PLAN
APPROVAL

Data for this document was collected from ILMS, Qflow, HPC Website, and Meta Business Accounts.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE



**FIRE
HYDRANTS**

**BUILDING
PERMITS**

**STREETS &
MARKINGS**

MANHOLES

**STREET
SIGNS**

**TRAFFIC
SIGNALS**

**STORMWATER
DRAINAGE**

**WASTEWATER
LINES**

**WATER
LINES**

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Understanding the permitting journey from start to finish

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

START

END



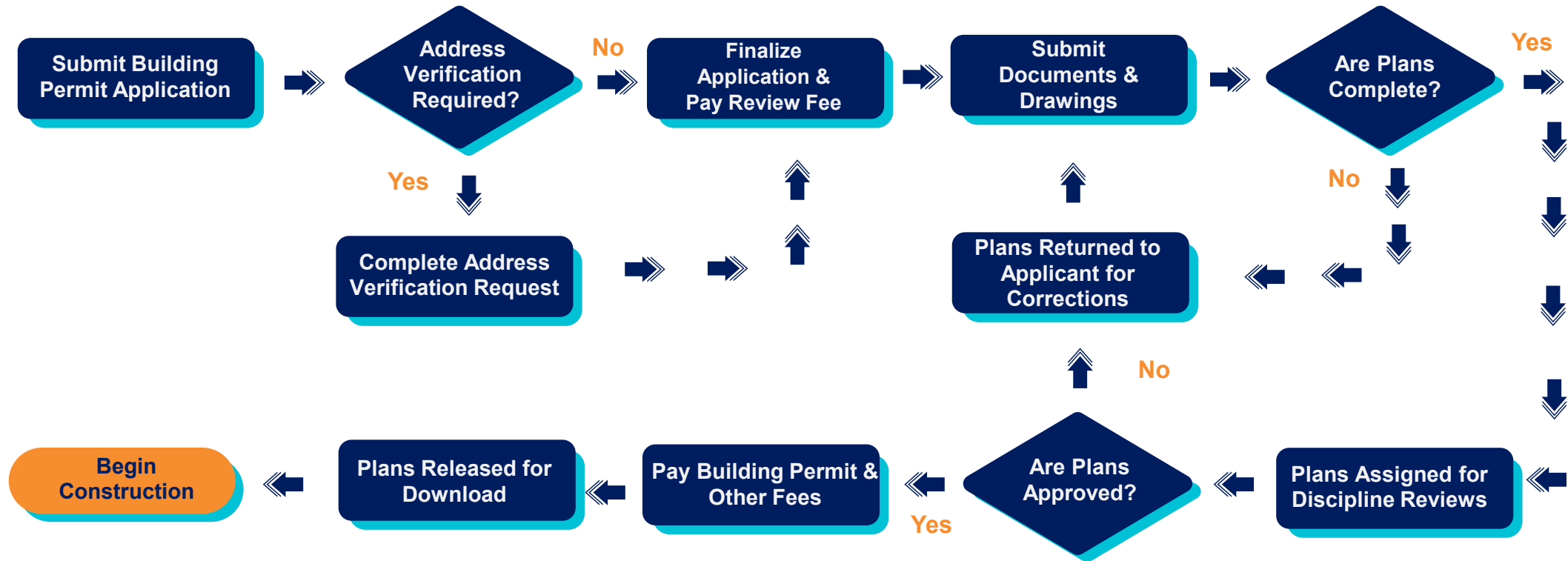
SITE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL

PLAN REVIEW & PERMITS

CONSTRUCTION & INSPECTIONS



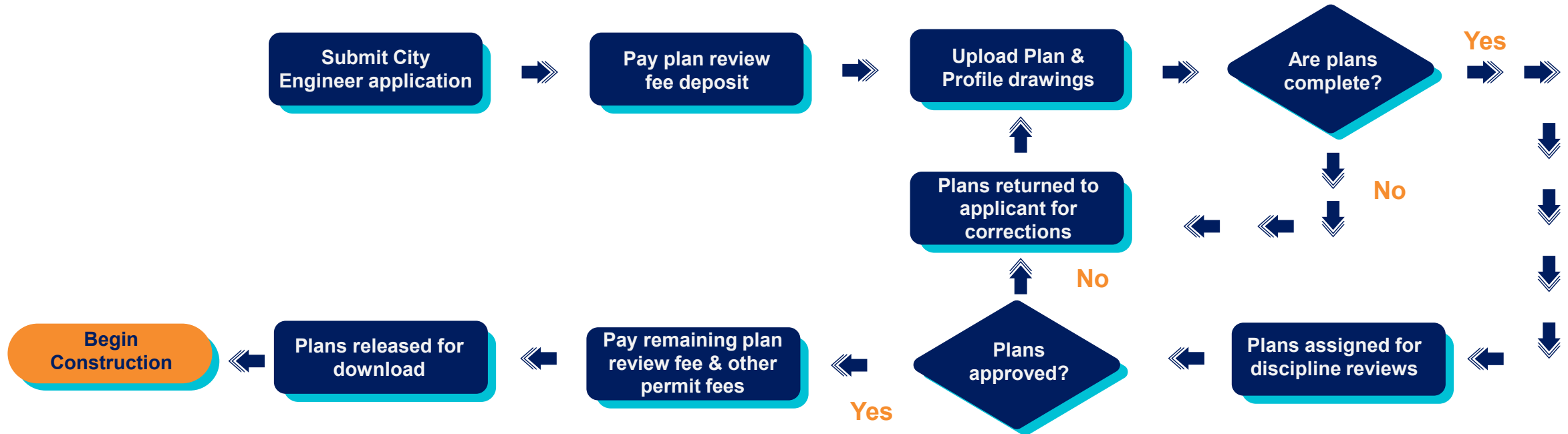
PRIVATE PROPERTY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT (BCE)



Discipline reviews are assigned based on the project's scope of work:

- Fire Alarms
- Fire Sprinklers
- HazMat/High Pile
- Taps & Meters
- Planning
- Urban Forestry
- Traffic
- Flood
- Health
- Infrastructure
- Houston Airport System
- Storm Drainage
- Mechanical
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Structural

RIGHT-OF-WAY PLAN REVIEW PROCESS OFFICE OF THE CITY ENGINEER (OCE)



Discipline reviews are assigned based on the project's scope of work:

- Stormwater (inside city limits)
- Stormwater (outside city limits)
- Water/Wastewater
- Wastewater Facilities
- Water facilities/JRC
- GIS-Digital Antenna System
- Telecommunication-DAS
- Flood
- Street and Traffic
- Planning
- Urban Forestry
- Houston Water

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

When planning a project, be sure to consider:

- Legal
- Utility availability
- Floodplain requirements
- Platting
- Setback requirements
- Survey and property lines





This GIS portal offers transparency with easy access to public data, information resources associated to the infrastructure that your public works department maintains. You can find links to downloadable geographic and tabular data that can be used and reused for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Check if you are in the city limits

GeoLink Public Map:
geohub.houstontx.gov

GEOLINK PUBLIC MAP

- Enter a street address, parcel ID, or keymap
- Click on the **Layers** tab
- Check the box for **References and Boundaries** and click the **+** sign to expand the options

The screenshot displays the Houston Public Works Geolink Public Map interface. At the top, the Houston Public Works logo is visible on the left, and a search bar on the right contains the text "7002 laughlin". Below the logo, there are navigation tabs: "Search & Identify", "Getting Around", "Printing & Data Sharing", "Drawing & Measurement", and "Help". The "Search & Identify" tab is active, showing various search tools like Point, Freehand, Line, Polygon, Rectangle, Filter, Address or Intersection, Search by XY, Plot Coordinates, Parcels, Keymap, Zipcode, Council District, and MUD. The "Layers" panel is open on the left, showing a list of layers with checkboxes and expand/collapse icons. The "Reference And Boundaries" layer is checked and expanded. The map area shows a residential street grid with a red location pin on Briargate Elementary School. The bottom status bar includes a home button, the "Layers" tab (highlighted with an orange box), the search bar with "7002 LAUG...", a scale bar, and coordinates.

GEOLINK PUBLIC MAP

- Click the "+" sign under the second **References and Boundaries**
- Check the box for **City Limit**

The screenshot displays the Houston Public Works Geolink Public Map interface. The top navigation bar includes the Houston Public Works logo, a search bar with the text "7002 laughlin", and a search icon. Below the navigation bar are several tabs: "Search & Identify", "Getting Around", "Printing & Data Sharing", "Drawing & Measurement", and "Help". The "Search & Identify" tab is active, showing a toolbar with icons for "Point", "Freehand", "Line", "Polygon", "Rectangle", "Filter", "Address or Intersection", "Search by XY", "Plot Coordinates", "Parcels", "Keymap", "Zipcode", "Council District", and "MUD".

The main map area shows a street grid with a red pin at Briargate Elementary School. The "Layers" panel on the left is open, and the "City Limit" layer is checked and highlighted with an orange box. The "City Limit" layer is expanded to show "Full Service" and "Limited Service" options. The "City Limit" layer is checked, and the "Full Service" and "Limited Service" options are visible. The "City Limit" layer is highlighted with an orange box.

The bottom status bar includes a "Home" button, a "Layers" button, a search bar with "7002 LAUG...", a "HPW Car..." button, a "WKD: 4326 Lat/Long" button, a "Lat: 29.60431° N Lon: 95.48486° W" button, a scale bar (0, 300, 600ft), and a "Public Works" button.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

File an open records request for permit and inspection history.

GovQA portal:

houstontx.gov/publicinformation

PERMIT BASICS

Who can purchase building and trade permits?

WHO CAN PURCHASE A PERMIT?



A building permit can be purchased by an owner, agent, or contractor.

- The City does not license or register general contractors

A trade permit must be purchased by a licensed contractor.

- **Electrical:** Master Electrician must be licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) and registered with the City of Houston
- **Mechanical:** Air Conditioning Contractor must have a type A or B license from the TDLR and be registered with the City of Houston
- **Plumbing:** Master Plumber must be licensed by the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners and registered with the City of Houston. In specific cases, a homeowner may obtain this permit

WHO CAN PURCHASE A PERMIT?



A trade permit must be purchased by a licensed contractor.

- **Sidewalk/Driveway:** only a bonded contractor with a \$2,000 surety bond may purchase a permit. Bonds must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**
- **Fire Alarm:** Fire alarm contractors must be licensed by the **Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) State Fire Marshal's Office** and be registered with the City of Houston. Copy of the license must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**
- **Fire Sprinkler:** Fire sprinkler contractors must be licensed by the **TDI State Fire Marshal's Office** and be registered with the City of Houston. Copy of the license must be submitted to the Permits Office at **Permits_Office@houstontx.gov**

INSPECTIONS & UTILITY RELEASES

What to expect during construction

INSPECTIONS AND UTILITY RELEASES

- Licensed contractors can purchase trade permits after the building permit has been sold.
- Once permits are purchased, work may begin.
- Plans and permits must remain on the job site for inspections.
- Inspections are required at various stages of construction.
 - Most inspections can be scheduled online at <https://bit.ly/4mKkOdp> or by calling the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 713.222.9922.



INSPECTIONS AND UTILITY RELEASES

- Temporary Utilities may be obtained after all permits are purchased. (A Temporary Cut In/ Temporary Gas - Permit must be purchased)
- All revisions must be approved prior to Final Inspection
- All deferred submittal items must be completed prior to Final Inspection
- After all inspections are complete, request Certificate(s) of Occupancy
- Remodels/Repairs are usually issued a Certificate of Compliance



BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS

STRUCTURAL INSPECTIONS

- ✓ **Pier / Foundation** - Schedule before placement of concrete
- ✓ **Windstorm** - Schedule prior to exterior sheathing installation to verify fasteners/straps
- ✓ **Frame** - Schedule after MEP rough-ins and prior to installing insulation and sheetrock.

Note: Truss plans should be approved at this time.

- ✓ **Lath/Brick Tie** - Schedule after frame inspection has been approved
- ✓ **Insulation** - Schedule after frame inspection has been approved
- ✓ **Building Final** - Schedule after the entire project has been completed to verify that all life safety and grading items have been installed and are working properly



PLUMBING INSPECTIONS

- ✓ **Ground, Sewer, Water Service, Storm Drainage, Lawn Sprinklers** - Schedule before pipes are covered
- ✓ **Rough-in** - Schedule before sheetrock is installed
- ✓ **Gas/Final** - Schedule when work is complete

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT INSPECTIONS

ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS

- ✓ **Ditch Cover** - Schedule when underground conduit is put in
- ✓ **Rough-in** - Schedule when walls and ceiling are wired
- ✓ **Temporary Cut-In** - Schedule when temporary power is needed to check wiring
- ✓ **Meter Loop Services/Final** - Schedule after all work is completed

MECHANICAL INSPECTIONS

- ✓ **Duct Seal** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ✓ **Cover** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ✓ **Grille Seal** - Schedule before insulation and sheetrock is installed
- ✓ **Final** - Schedule after work is complete



REPORTING VIOLATIONS

CODE VIOLATIONS

Report suspected work without a permit to 311

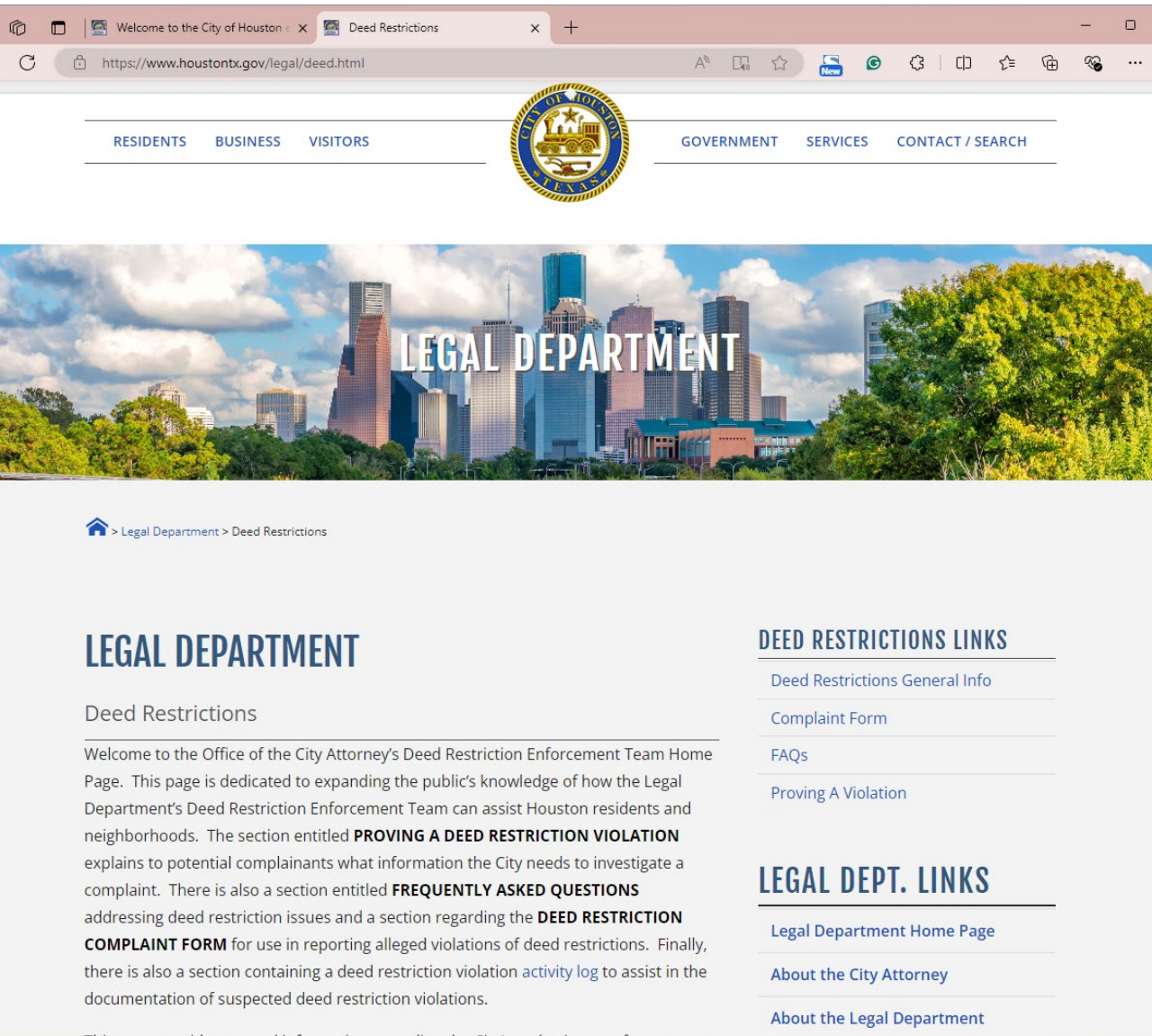
- Call 311 or 713-837-0311

www.houstontx.gov/311

311@houstontx.gov

- Houston 311 mobile app
Google Play and App Store

The screenshot shows the Houston 311 website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Start a Case', 'Check Case Status', '311 Data', 'How to Video', 'Knowledge Base', 'About', 'Top 25 Requests Page', and 'English'. Below this is a banner with the text 'WELCOME TO HOUSTON 311' and a sub-header 'Request, track and explore information'. A blue bar below the banner displays 'Su Tiempo de Espera - Espanol Cortes 1 minutos @ Oct 8 2024 5:08PM'. The main content area is titled 'Top Service Requests' and lists various issue categories: Nuisance On Property, Pothole, Sewer Wastewater, Traffic Signal Maintenance, Trash Dumping Or Illegal Dumpsite, Water Leak, and Report Another Problem. To the right, a 'Report a Problem' form is open, showing a map of Houston with red dots indicating service requests. An orange arrow points from the 'Report a Problem' button to the 'Private Construction - Code or Permit Violation' option in the dropdown menu. Other options in the menu include 'Parking Meter - Parking Violations', 'Water - Wastewater - Water Quality - Water Billing', 'None of the above', 'City and Private Construction', 'PW CIP Project - Information/Status/Damage', and 'New Capitol Improvement Project Request'. At the bottom of the form, there is a text input field labeled 'Type your message' and a 'View lar' link.



DEED RESTRICTION VIOLATIONS

Building permit applicants must sign a sworn declaration that the project complies with their deed restrictions

Report violations to the Legal Department

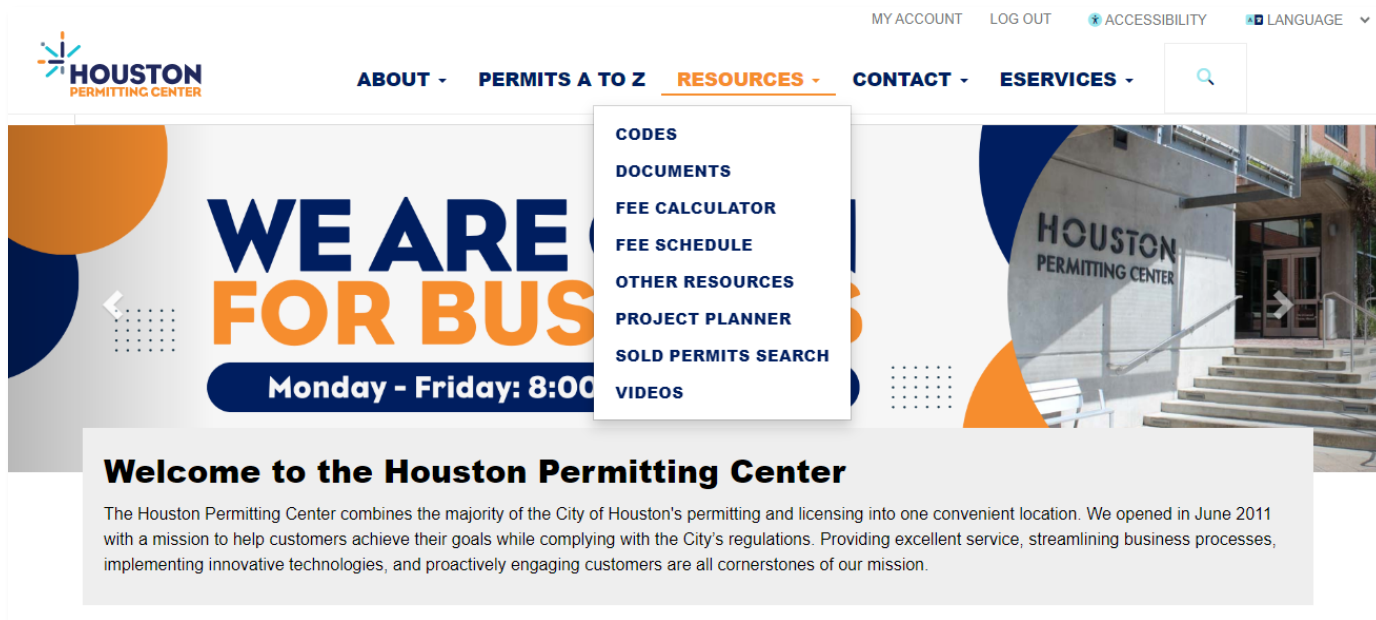
houstontx.gov/legal/deed.html

ONLINE TOOLS

Online resources available on the
Houston Permitting Center website

ONLINE TOOLS

HPC Webpage - www.houstonpermittingcenter.org



RESOURCES

Codes

2021 Code Amendments

Documents

Guides, Forms, and Other Documents

Fee Calculator

Online tool that allows customers to estimate their building permit fees.

Fee Schedule

View or download printable versions of Building Code Enforcement's 2024 fee schedules

Project Planner

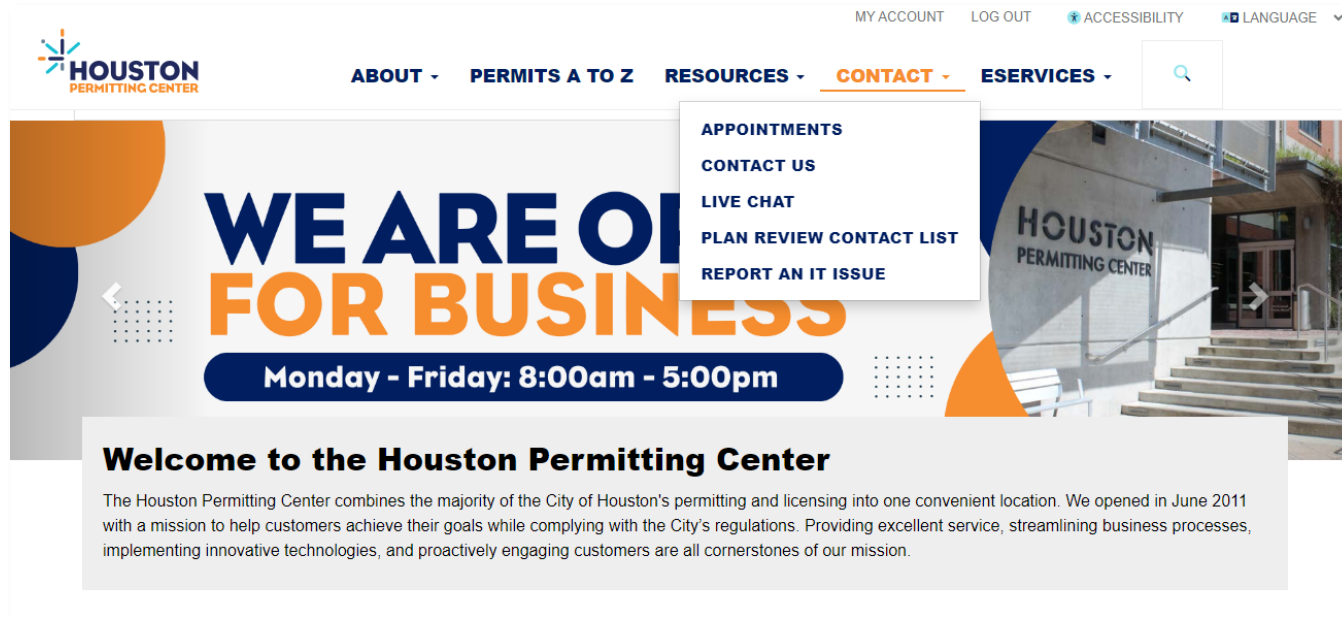
Answer questions about your business or construction project, and the Project Planner will identify the permits you'll need from the City of Houston

Sold Permits Search

To obtain information about basic permit history, you can use this search option

ONLINE TOOLS

HPC Webpage - www.houstonpermittingcenter.org



CONTACT

Appointments

Customers can conveniently schedule and check-in for appointments and obtain a digital QFlow eTicket for walk-in services for certain groups

Live Chat

Available
Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Plan Review Contact List

This list is updated monthly

Report An IT Issue

Use this form to report only IT issues you are having with iPermits or ProjectDox

ONLINE TOOLS

HPC Webpage - www.houstonpermittingcenter.org



ESERVICES

iPermits
Register & Apply for a Permit

ProjectDox
Upload & Submit Plan

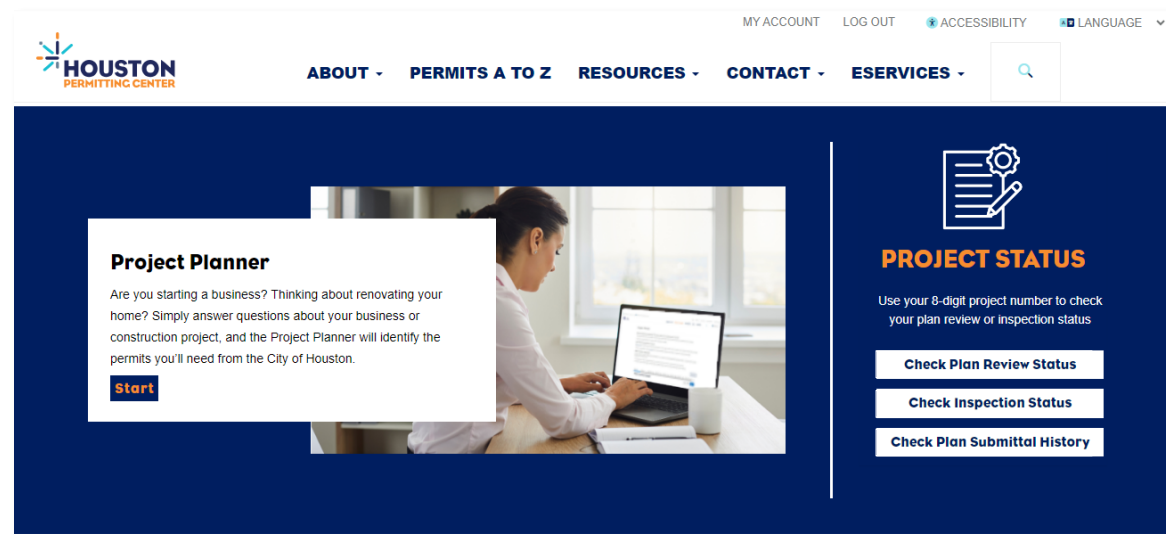
How-To-Guides
Residential and Commercial Electronic Permitting Guides

Inspection Notifications System
Receive text notifications informing you about upcoming site inspections by inspectors.

Water Meters
Taps and Meters Permits

ONLINE TOOLS

HPC Webpage - www.houstonpermittingcenter.org



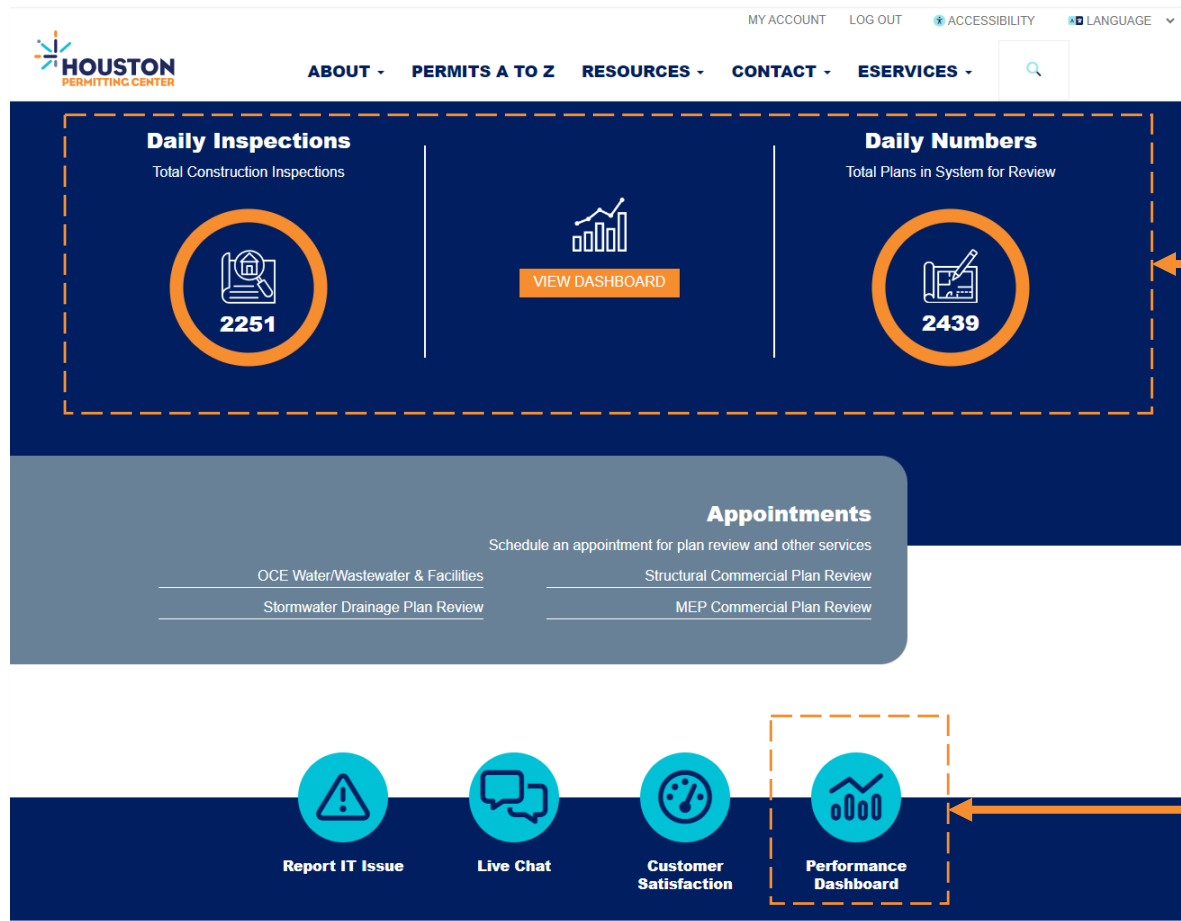
Check Plan Review Status
Customers can check the status of their plan review and view any correction comments

Check Inspection Status
Customers can schedule inspections and then review the results and comments from those inspections

Check Plan Submittal History
Customers can review the submission history of a project's plans

ONLINE TOOLS

HPC Webpage - www.houstonpermittingcenter.org



Performance Dashboard

Interactive dashboard provides an at-a-glance view of our daily performance, including the total plans in the system for review and the number of business days of the oldest plan.

CONTACT US

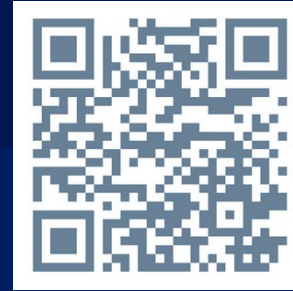
Houston Permitting Center



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X
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Instagram
@COHPermits



YouTube
@COHPermits



Houston Permitting Center
1002 Washington Ave.
Houston, TX 77002

 832.394.9000

 www.houstonpermittingcenter.org

 askHPC@houstontx.gov

QUESTION & ANSWER

You Have Questions, We are here to help !!!



thank you!



HoustonPublicWorks.org

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