

## CONTACTS

COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER, 2 WOODWARD AVENUE

Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department

**BSEED Development Resource Center**

Room 434 | (313) 224-2372 | [drc@detroitmi.gov](mailto:drc@detroitmi.gov) | [detroitmi.gov/drc](https://detroitmi.gov/drc)

**BSEED Property Maintenance Division**

Room 412 | (313) 628-2451

**BSEED Business License Center**

Room 402 | (313) 224-3179

**Office of the Assessor**

Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>

**Treasury Revenue Collections**

Room 105 | (313) 224-2389 | [RevenueCollections@Detroitmi.gov](mailto:RevenueCollections@Detroitmi.gov)

**Department of Appeals & Hearings (DAH)**

Room 1004 | (313) 224-0098 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/department-appeals-and-hearings>

**DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health**

3245 E. Jefferson

Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

## KEY TERMS

**Blight violation:** violations given when an owner fails to maintain their property. If the issue is not corrected, a ticket is issued.

**By Right vs. Conditional Use:** Not all uses are allowed in all buildings/neighborhoods. Some uses are permitted "by right" in your zoning designation, and some uses (conditional) require special exemptions.

**FOIA:** Freedom of Information Act, is a federal law that grants the public access to information possessed by government agencies.

**Historic Designation:** A zoning designation in historic districts that has specific requirements.

**Legal use:** The legally permitted purpose of a property, as permitted by the City of Detroit.

**Lein:** Outstanding debt on property that can inhibit the transfer of the property.

**Main Street Designation:** A zoning designation that has specific requirements established by the state.

**Personal Property Taxes:** The State of Michigan requires business owners to pay taxes on their personal property. This is the tangible property that is used to make a profit (equipment, cash registers, shelves, etc.). The owed personal property tax follows the equipment, not the building.

**Plan Review:** The process of submitting building plans for approval (conditional land use, building permits etc.)

**Variance:** A variance is a request to deviate from current zoning requirements. If granted, it permits the owner to use the land in a manner not otherwise permitted by the zoning ordinance.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business  
in the City of Detroit



## I'M CONSIDERING SIGNING A LEASE OR PURCHASING A BUILDING

Before you commit to a property you should confirm that your intended business is allowed on that plot of land and within the building as it is currently classified by the City of Detroit. This requires checking to see if your building or location is properly zoned for your planned business, and if the last legal use matches the intended use of your business. If the location zoning and legal use does not match your planning business, consider the time and money you would invest in changing the use and/or undergoing a zoning variance application before you proceed. Most importantly, know that the change is not guaranteed and there are many factors that can influence whether you are allowed to establish your business type on that land. Additionally, take some time to research the licensing requirements for your type of business with the State of Michigan and City of Detroit. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

## DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

*Contact your District Business Liaison (DBL)*

**District 1:** Tenecia Johnson  
(313) 460-0775  
[tjohnson@degc.org](mailto:tjohnson@degc.org)

**District 2:** Ammie Woodruff  
(313) 510-8261  
[awoodruff@degc.org](mailto:awoodruff@degc.org)

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**District 7:** Brianna Walker  
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[bwalker@degc.org](mailto:bwalker@degc.org)

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Icon Key									
In-Person	Call	Mail	Online	Email	Required	Recommend	Form	Fee	

	What					How	Who & Where	Form/Fee
	✓						BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓						BSEED Property Maintenance Division	
	✓						BSEED Property Maintenance Division	
	✓						BSEED Business License Center	
		✓					OCFO Office of the Assessor	
		✓					OCFO Office of the Assessor	
			✓				OCFO Treasury Revenue Collections, DivDat Kiosk	
				✓			DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
				✓			DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
					✓		Department of Appeals & Hearings	

### Other Recommended Steps

- Check for lien on property
- Ensure all personal tax returns are paid and filed
- Request information on outstanding fees
- File a FOIA request to the Fire Department and Fire Marshal division for past & outstanding violations or environmental information (this can be done through a private consultant and costs \$200-\$300) or go to Detroit Public Safety HQ (1301 3rd Ave) and ask for outstanding permit fees
- For restaurants: have a good idea what your menu will be

and the equipment you need; make sure the space is the right size and there are enough gas and electric circuits for your project

- Consider conducting a baseline environmental assessment
- Communicate with the State liquor control if you will be requiring a liquor license
- Check for tax incentives & know when these incentives expire. Determine how this impacts your business plan
- Require the seller to get a Tax Clearance and provide to the buyer before purchasing

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Office of the Assessor

Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>

Department of Appeals & Hearings (DAH)

Room 1004 | (313) 224-0098 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/department-appeals-and-hearings>

DWSD CUSTOMER CARE CENTER

Downtown | 735 Randolph Street

1st Floor | Phone: (313) 267-8000

Eastside | 13303 East McNichols

Phone: (313) 267-8000

Westside | 15600 Grand River

Phone: (313) 267-8000

DFD Fire Marshal

Detroit Public Safety Headquarters, 1301 Third Street

To Pay Fees; Room 705 | (313) 596-2954

To Schedule Appointments; Room 705 | (313) 596-2954

DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health

3245 E. Jefferson

Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

## KEY TERMS

**Blight Clearance:** Application to check for outstanding blight tickets on the property.

**Blight violation:** blight violations are given when an owner fails to maintain their property. If the issue is not corrected, a ticket is issued.

**LARA:** Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

**MDARD:** Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

**MDEQ:** Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

**Tax Clearance:** Application to check for no outstanding taxes on property, business or equipment.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business  
in the City of Detroit



## I HAVE PURCHASED A BUILDING OR SIGNED A LEASE FOR MY BUSINESS

Once you have secured a property, there are steps you need to take to properly register your property and clear issues left behind by the previous owner or occupant. If you are leasing, you are still required to register your business with the Assessor's Office at their business counter. Additionally, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with the processes, applications, and licenses required before opening. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

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### Icon Key



						What	How	Who & Where	Form/Fee
		✓				File Deed with Assessor's Office within 45 days of purchase.		OCFO Office of the Assessor	
		✓				Apply for Personal Property ID number (aka. Tax ID or Parcel number).		OCFO Office of the Assessor	
		✓				File Personal Property Statement.		OCFO Office of the Assessor, Personal Property Tax Section	
				✓		Apply for a Blight Clearance		Department of Appeals & Hearings	
					✓	Open a new water account or establish new water service with a meter (if the building was removed from the demolition list and the water line needs to be reinstated).		DWSD Customer Care Center	
					✓	Check for outstanding fees.		DFD Fire Marshal	
					✓	Request fire inspection.		DFD Fire Marshal	
	✓					Conduct a pre-plan review conference.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
		✓				Ensure that license applications are properly submitted and approved.		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	

### State & County Requirements

- File deed with Wayne County Court
- For swimming pools contact MDEQ for permit to build
- For grocery stores, party stores, food manufacturers, food distributors contact MDARD for license
- For body art contact Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- For childcare and medical facilities contact Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

### Other Recommended Steps

- Familiarize yourself with the City of Detroit's Electronic Permitting System
- Read the Health Department plan review packet and contact Health Department with questions
- Review previous health inspection reports if the facility is a formerly existing food establishment. Contact Health Department to see if there are outstanding fees on account

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**Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department**  
**BSEED Development Resource Center**  
Room 434 | (313) 224-2372 | [drc@detroitmi.gov](mailto:drc@detroitmi.gov) | [detroitmi.gov/drc](https://detroitmi.gov/drc)  
**BSEED Zoning**  
Room 407 | (313) 224-1317 | [zoning@detroitmi.gov](mailto:zoning@detroitmi.gov)  
**City Clerk**  
Room 200 | (313) 224-3260  
**Office of the Assessor**  
Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>  
**DFD Plan Examination**  
Room 411 | (313) 224-1311  
**DPW City Engineering, Survey Bureau**  
Room 642 | (313) 224-3970

**DWSD Stormwater Management Group**  
6425 Huber St, Detroit, MI 48211  
(313) 267-8000 | [swgroup@detroitmi.gov](mailto:swgroup@detroitmi.gov)

**DWSD, 735 Randolph Street**  
**Field Engineering**  
Room 104 | (313) 267-8309  
**Permits Customer Service**  
(313) 964-9293

**DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health**  
3245 E. Jefferson  
Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

## KEY TERMS

**By Right vs. Conditional Use:** Not all uses are allowed in all buildings/neighborhoods. Some uses are permitted “by right” in your zoning designation, and some uses (conditional) require special exemptions.

**Encroachment:** An encroachment is any privately owned and maintained improvement located within the public right-of-way.

**Easement:** Easements are a right given to another person or entity to trespass upon or use land owned by somebody else.

**E-plans:** The city's online Building Plan submission portal. Allows plans to be submitted and reviewed online.

**Established use:** The legally permitted purpose of a property, as permitted by the City of Detroit.

**MEP:** Mechanical, Engineering and Plumbing.

**Plan Review:** The process of submitting building plans for approval (conditional land use, building permits etc.)

**Stormwater Management Plan:** The city requires new and re-development to implement stormwater management practices.

**Vacation:** A street vacation, also known as an alley vacation or vacation of public access, is a type of easement in which a government transfers the right-of-way of a public street, highway or alley to a private property owner.

**Variance:** A variance is a request to deviate from current zoning requirements. If granted, it permits the owner to use the land in a manner not otherwise permitted by the zoning ordinance.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business  
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# I HAVE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS FOR MY SPACE

If you are establishing a new business in a new space, in many cases you need to submit construction documents signed by a licensed architect or engineer. This is especially required if you are changing the use or type of business in a space. For example, if you are establishing a carry-out food establishment in what used to be a sit-down restaurant. Your plans must be approved by the Building, Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED), the Detroit Health Department, and the Fire Department before you can begin construction. The City wants to protect you from unlicensed contractors who might cause you to fail your final inspections, so it is important that you make sure your contractor is able to get all the necessary permits before work is started. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

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**District 7:** Brianna Walker  
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[bwalker@degc.org](mailto:bwalker@degc.org)

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BSEED	Assessor's Office	Health Department	DPW	DWSD	Fire Department	City Clerk's Office
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### Icon Key

								
In-Person	Call	Mail	Online	Email	Required	Recommend	Form	Fee

								What	How	Who & Where	Form/Fee
	✓							Submit plans to BSEED for Plan Review.		BSEED Development Resource Center	 
			✓					Submit plans to Health Department for Plan Review for approval.	 	DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	 
						✓		Submit plans to Fire Department for approval.		DFD Plan Examination	 
		✓						Submit copy of construction drawings.	 	Office of the Assessor	
	✓							If needed, request building permit for change of use.		BSEED Development Resource Center	 
	✓							Request building permits.	 	BSEED Development Resource Center	 
	✓							Make sure your contractors get trade permits (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing).	 	BSEED Development Resource Center	 
	✓							Ensure that sign contractor pulls the necessary permits from the City of Detroit.		BSEED Development Resource Center	 
				✓				If your project will permanently use public alleys or sidewalks, request a permanent encroachment.		DPW City Engineering, Survey Bureau	
					✓			If creating/replacing at least 1/2 acre of impervious surface (e.g., a parking lot), pay plan review fee to DWSD in order to comply with stormwater management ordinance.	 	DWSD Stormwater Management Group	 
					✓			If modifying water or sewer lines outside of building, or if fire separation lines are needed (per Fire Marshal), submit plans and get a permit.		DWSD Field Engineering, DWSD Permits Customer Service	 
					✓			If planning a petition for an encroachment or easment in the public right-of-way, or outright vacation (taking over an alley completely), review plans and get advice in advance.		DWSD Field Engineering	
	✓							If plans are denied, you can appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals.		BSEED Zoning	 
							✓	If planning to have a temporary seasonal patio or cafe, submit request for temporary cafe permit.	 	City Clerk's Office	 

### Other recommended Steps

If the project requires a variance or hearing, learn what and how the community feels about the project



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Room 402 | (313) 224-3179  
**BSEED Construction Division**  
Room 408 | (313) 628-2451 | [BSEED-Construction@detroitmi.gov](mailto:BSEED-Construction@detroitmi.gov)  
**DPW City Engineering**  
Room 642 | (313) 224-3935  
**Treasury Clearances Section**  
Room 106 | (313) 224-3328 | [IncomeTaxClearance@Detroitmi.gov](mailto:IncomeTaxClearance@Detroitmi.gov)

**DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health**  
3245 E. Jefferson  
Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

**DWSD Customer Service Center**  
735 Randolph Street  
(313) 964-9293

**DFD Fire Marshal**  
Detroit Public Safety Headquarters, 1301 Third Street  
To Pay Fees; Room 705 | (313) 596-2954  
To Schedule Appointments; Room 705 | (313) 596-2954

## KEY TERMS

**Right-of-Way:** Construction that will impact the street or sidewalk requires a permit from the Department of Public Works.

**Trade Permits:** MEP work must be done by a licensed mechanic, electrical and plumber.

### OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business  
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## I BEGAN CONSTRUCTION ON MY BUSINESS

Once the City of Detroit has approved your construction plans, your contractor must get permits to begin construction. You are responsible for making sure the permits and plans are posted and present at the worksite at all times. It is important that you maintain communication with the Building, Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED) and the Health Department through this process, particularly if your plans change. Additionally, before you close out the walls, you should secure rough inspections for plumbing, HVAC, and electrical work to avoid issues at time of the final inspection. At this point it is also recommended that you start the process of applying for the various licenses required for opening. Most licenses require several steps and various inspections and clearances. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

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In-Person	Call	Mail	Online	Email	Required	Recommend	Form	Fee	

									What	How	Who & Where	Form/Fee
					✓				If construction will use sidewalks (scaffolding), get Right-of-Way permits.		DPW City Engineering	
	✓							✓	Keep approved plans on site during construction AT ALL TIMES.			
	✓								Secure Trade Permits (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing).		BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓			✓				✓	Submit revised plans if changes occur after Health Department approval - including changes in equipment (Food Service and other business types requiring Health Service approval).		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health, BSEED Construction Division	
								✓	Get permits for temporary fuel storage.		DFD Fire Marshal	
	✓							✓	Schedule a "rough" inspection before finishing the walls (do not close walls before approval).		DFD Fire Marshal; BSEED Construction Division	
								✓	Start your water service with the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department.		DWSD Customer Service Center	
				✓					Submit Food Service license application (Food service establishments only).		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
	✓								Contact Business License Center to determine what approvals you will need.		BSEED Business License Center	
	✓								Schedule final inspection when construction is complete.		BSEED Construction Division	
								✓	Schedule acceptance testing of fire alarm and suppression systems.		DFD Fire Marshal	
								✓	Schedule final fire inspection.		DFD Fire Marshal	
				✓					Schedule pre-opening inspection.		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
			✓						Apply for Income Tax Clearance.		OCFO Treasury Clearances Section	
			✓						Apply for Accounts Recievable Clearance.		OCFO Treasury Clearances Section	

### State and County Requirements

Schedule pre-opening inspections with relevant State agencies for State-licensed business types

### Other recommended Steps

Body art must file with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS); MDHHS will receive an automatic email from Detroit Health Department to schedule inspection



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Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department

BSEED Business License Center

Room 402 | (313) 224-3179

BSEED Construction Division

Room 408 | (313) 628-2451 | BSEED-Construction@detroitmi.gov

BSEED Property Maintenance

Room 412 | (313) 628-2451

Income Tax Division

Room 130 | (313) 224-3315

Office of the Assessor

Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>

Treasury Clearances Section

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## KEY TERMS

**C of A, Certificate of Acceptance:** Required if no change is made to use or occupancy. Indicates that any alterations made are acceptable.

**C of C, Certificate of Compliance:** Required if no construction is needed. Indicates that a building meets all city codes and is safe to occupy.

**C of O, Certificate of Occupancy:** Required if the project included construction. Indicates that a building meets all city codes and is safe to occupy. The C of O is issued upon request of the customer by BSEED after verification that all the required division approvals (electrical, plumbing, mechanical and building) have been obtained.

**Personal Property Taxes:** The State of Michigan requires business owners to pay taxes on their personal property. This is the tangible property that is used to make a profit (equipment, cash registers, shelves, etc.). The owed personal property tax follows the equipment, not the building.

**Occupancy:** The classification of a room or enclosed space designed for human use according to the fire safety and relative hazard involved. This occupancy classification determines the appropriate egress, light, and ventilation code requirements that must be met.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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# I AM READY TO OPEN!

Congratulations on making it this far through the process! Before you open your doors, you should make sure that your business is in full compliance with all City departments and that you pass all necessary inspections and clearances. This includes making sure all inspections are completed, a Certificate of Compliance, Occupancy, or Acceptance is received, and any needed clearances and licenses are acquired. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

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### Icon Key

								
In-Person	Call	Mail	Online	Email	Required	Recommend	Form	Fee

				What	How	Who & Where	Form/Fee
	✓			Option A: If no construction was done (but you still needed to address blight for your property), schedule inspection for Certificate of Compliance.	  	BSEED Property Maintenance	
	✓			Option B: If Change of Occupancy or Use was required and construction was done, request Certificate of Occupancy .	 	BSEED Construction	 
	✓			Option C: If construction was done with no Change of Occupancy or Use, request Certificate of Acceptance.	 	BSEED Construction	 
		✓		Open assessment notice - appeal the assessment if necessary (two assessments, Real and Personal Property).	 	OCFO Office of the Assessor	
		✓		File Personal Property Tax Exemption every year by February 20th.	 	OCFO Office of the Assessor, Personal Property Tax Section	
			✓	Setup payroll and report employee tax withholding.	 	OCFO Income Tax Division	
			✓	Apply for Income Tax Clearance and get approved.	 	OCFO Treasury Clearances Section	
			✓	Apply for Accounts Receivable clearance and get approved.	 	OCFO Treasury Clearances Section	
			✓	Ensure variances, if any, have been approved (special process, outer openings, etc).	 	DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	 
			✓	Correct any outstanding health violations.	 	DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
			✓	Confirm that you have obtained the appropriate health license (food service, body art, etc.) and post it at your business.	 	DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	 
	✓			Apply for Business License (dependent on business type), receive the final license, and post it at your business.	 	BSEED Business License Center	