

Starting a Business

In order to help businesses looking to locate in Franklin Township we have created this step-by-step guide to walk you through the permitting processes required of all businesses in the township. While this guide seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, we recognize that questions may still arise. We encourage you to contact the township's Land Use Administrative Officer at zoning@franklintownship.com.

Getting Started

We want your experience with the township to be the best that it can be. We understand that the process can seem overwhelming. To help you through the process, the township's Land Use Administrative Officer will act as your Business Liaison, guiding you through the process from start to finish and answering any questions you may have.

Simply call and make an appointment to speak with our Land Use Administrative Officer. If you're ready to get started with permits please follow the step-by-step instructions to make sure you have all the information you will need to submit to the township.

[IS THE BUSINESS LIAISON THE SAME AS THE LAND USE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER?]

Step-By-Step Guide

Zoning Permits

When opening a business in the township, the first thing you need to do is to determine whether or not the business is a permitted use in the location in which you plan to operate. In addition to determining the acceptability of the type of business, the township must determine the suitability of the site to support your business. In most cases this simply involves making sure there is enough on-site parking. All of this is completed as part of the Zoning Permit process. Zoning Permit applications are available on our website.

Building Permits

Assuming your business is a permitted use and not substantially different from the previous use, and assuming that on-site parking is sufficient, you will be issued a Zoning Approval. Then, the Construction Department will review any building permits or other forms you have submitted along with your Zoning Approval.

A Certificate of Continued Occupancy is required for a new tenant or property owner. The Certificate is issued after a township Inspector inspects the site to ensure it meets the requirements for the business you intend to operate. If it passes the inspection, you will be issued the Certificate of Continued Occupancy, at which time you may begin to operate your business.

If you are changing the use of the building from a lower use and occupancy classification to a higher classification, or if you need to complete construction work, you will be required to apply for a Certificate of Occupancy. If you are unsure of your use and occupancy classifications, please contact the Construction Department.

Sign Permits

Every business in the township is required to obtain a sign permit whenever they are installing a new sign or changing an existing sign. This applies to façade, as well as freestanding signs.

Planning & Zoning Boards

There are a number of situations that may trigger the need for an application to one of the township's Land Use Development Boards.

Each board has a dedicated Land Use Administrative Officer who can help you through the application process. Any incorporated business is also required to be represented by counsel to help you with the application requirements.

Please keep in mind that the process of applying to either board can be a lengthy process. Applications that are not complete will be deemed so, and a list of items that must still be submitted will be sent to the applicant. An incomplete application can slow down the process significantly.

In addition, both boards meet once per month, so your ability to get on an agenda will depend on the completeness of your application and the number of applications that are already scheduled.

New Building or Major Changes to Existing Building

If you are planning to build a new building or make changes to the building or parking lot, you may need to apply to the Planning Board for a site plan review. The size of the change will determine if it is major or minor application.

Applying for a Use Variance

If the type of business you are intending to operate is not permitted in the zone in which you want to locate, or if you are substantially changing the use of the site from its previous use, you must apply to the township's Zoning Board of Adjustment for a use variance. If a site plan is required, the Zoning Board will review the site plan instead of the Planning Board.

If you have any questions on opening a new business, please contact the Land Use Administrative Officer at zoning@franklintownship.com.