



## Frequently Asked Questions

Public Works and  
Community Development Department

City of Shenandoah, Texas  
29955 I-45 North  
Shenandoah, Texas 77381  
281-298-5522  
[www.shenandoah.tx.us](http://www.shenandoah.tx.us)

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### **Building Department: Residential and Commercial use Building Permits**

Q: Where is the City of Shenandoah Building Department Located and what are the hours of operation?

A: Shenandoah Municipal Complex is located at 29955 IH 45 N, Shenandoah, Texas 77381.

The City of Shenandoah Building Department's normal business hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Q: When is a permit required?

A: A permit is required when there is new construction to a building, remodeling or enlargement to a building as well as some repair work or alterations to an existing structure. Projects that are considered cosmetic such as new wallpaper, carpet, paint, cabinets or trim work does not request a permit. For any further information regarding when a permit is required, please contact the City of Shenandoah Building Inspector concerning your specific project.

Q: How long does the review process take on residential and commercial projects?

A: The City of Shenandoah Building Department's goal on the review process is as follows: Residential new single-family/duplex or single-family addition: ten (10) business days upon the initial submission of plans. If further reviews are needed for revision or changes in plans then ten (10) business days are allotted upon the resubmission of plans. Commercial new projects/multi-family/parking lots, new additions or Interior finishes: typically ten (10) business days upon the initial submission of plans. If further reviews are needed for revisions or changes in plans, then ten (10) business days are allotted upon the resubmission of plans. Occupancy applications and Temporary Construction Trailers: two (2) business days upon the initial submission of plans.

Q: What is the cost of a permit?

A: The cost of each permit will vary according to the type of permit. Please refer to the City of Shenandoah Permit Fee Schedule for further information.

Q: What forms of payment are accepted?

A: The City of Shenandoah accepts cash or checks only for payment on all building projects.

Q: What is a Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.)

A: A Certificate of Occupancy or C.O. is required for all buildings or structures that are occupied or used. A Certificate of Occupancy or C.O. provides documentation that all required inspections were completed and the space is now available to be occupied. When a tenant leases a new space a C.O. shall be required.

Q: Is a permit required to occupy or use a lease space?

A: Yes. A Certificate of Occupancy is required and must be applied for through the City of Shenandoah Building Department.

Q: Can a portion of the building or structure be occupied prior to the completion of the entire building or structure?

A: A partial or condition Certificate of Occupancy can be issued by the City of Shenandoah Building Inspector under certain conditions.

Q: Are there any licenses or certificates required to operate a restaurant?

A: Yes. For a detailed listing of specific requirements please contact Montgomery County Health Department. They can be reached at 936.756.0571 or in person at 501 North Thompson, Suite 401, Conroe, Texas 77301.

Q: When can utilities be turned on?

A: Utilities for construction purposed may be released after permits are issued and installations are inspected by the City of Shenandoah Building Inspector.

Q: Can a Temporary Power Permit be issued prior to the date the building permit is issued?

A: Yes, provided building plans have been submitted for review.

Q: What construction can occur on property before issuance of a building permit, and when can dirt work begin on a permit?

A: Site grading is authorized with a permit from the City of Shenandoah Building Inspector.

Q: Can a application be made for a building permit while the site is being platted or zoning is pending?

A: Yes. However, the building permit will not be issued until all platting and zoning issues are approved.

Q: When are sidewalks required?

A: Sidewalks are required along any street upon which a lot abuts, regardless of whether such lot faces, abuts on the side, backs up to such street, or is separated from such street by an alley. The only exceptions to this requirement are: 1) On local streets in a FWY Freeway District, LI Light Industrial District, HI Heavy Industrial District or IP Industrial Park District; 2) Along freeways and freeway frontage roads; 3) On property that was a legal lot of record prior to April 2, 1962; and 4) Within existing subdivision accepted without sidewalks.

Q: Are there any variances to the general Design Standards of the City of Shenandoah?

A: The General Design Standards are minimum standards that may be exceeded. However, no variance procedure exists except for variances to the spacing of median openings.

Q: What is the masonry requirement put into place by the City of Shenandoah?

A: 80% of each wall must be of a masonry material and defined by the Integrated Development Code.

Q: Am I allowed to cut down a tree on my property and is a permit required?

A: If the tree is located on a single family residential property and not a tree that has been designated as part of a City approved vegetation plan that was required to meet vegetation ordinance requirements or part of a landscape buffer requirement, you can remove the tree without a permit. If you are unsure if this applies to your property, please contact the Public Works Department at 281-298-5522.

### **Fire Alarm and Sprinkler: Residential and Commercial use**

Q: What are the requirements for sprinkler systems design and installation?

A: Fire protection sprinkler systems must be designed and installed by an agency or individual licensed by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. Systems must meet the applicable requirements set forth by the Nation Fire Protection Association Standards, i.e., 13, 13D, 13R, 231, or 231C.

Q: What are the requirements for fire alarm and detection devices?

A: Fire alarm and detections systems must be designed and installed by an agency or individual licensed by the Texas Commission on Fire Protections. Systems must meet applicable requirements set forth by the National Fire Protections Association Standards, i.e. 72. Smoke detectors are required in order to make the fire

alarm system addressable. In common areas or any other rooms required by NFPA72 even if the building is 100% sprinklered.

Q: How many fire extinguishers are needed in a building?

A: Fire Extinguishers should be located such that the travel distance to any extinguisher is not greater than seventy-five (75) feet. Extinguishers must be a minimum size of 2A5BC. Larger sizes may be needed depending on type of occupancy.

Q: When is a fire lane required?

A: Typically, fire lanes are required when any portion of a building is located greater than 150 feet away from a paved public way. Fire lanes are required to be 24 feet in width and concrete.

Q: What striping is required on fire lanes?

A: Striping must be six (6) inches wide, red painted stripe, with four (4) inch high white letter stating "FIRE LANE – TOW AWAY ZONE" at fifty (50) foot intervals. Striping must be painted with an exterior acrylic latex paint. Strip color must be "Traffic Red", Glidden #63251 or equal and letters shall be "Traffic White", Glidden #563245 or equal.

Q: Can fire lanes have gates across them?

A: Gates crossing fire lanes must be approved by the Fire Marshal's Office. If a gate is allowed, it must have a 24 foot clear width and a Knox Lock installed.

Q: Where is the fire department connection FDC for the sprinklers system located?

A: The FDC should be located on the building within fifty (50) feet of a fire lane or public street. Height of the FDC shall be 18" and 48" off of final grade.

Q: Are fire hydrants needed for a property?

A: Typically, fire hydrants are located on street frontages and spaced at 300 foot intervals in commercial areas and 600 foot intervals in residential areas. Some large commercial developments may require fire hydrants to be located on site in an easement.

Q: How are flow test results for fire hydrants obtained?

A: Flow tests are conducted by the fire sprinkler companies but witnessed by officials from the City of Shenandoah Public Works Department or by the Fire Marshal.

Q: How is a Knox Lock or Knox Box obtained and what is their purpose?

A: Knox Boxes are security boxes placed on the outside of a building at the front doors. Property keys are stored in the box to provide fire department access in the event of an emergency. The Woodlands Fire Department is the only agency that has access to the Knox Box. Knox Locks are provided on gates for Fire Department access. Knox Locks or Knox Boxes are required when access to or within a building is unduly difficult or where immediate access is necessary for life safety on all new business or gates. Purchase order forms can be obtained thru the Fire Marshal only.

### **Planning and Development: Land use and Local Ordinances**

Q: Where can a plat be obtained for an existing platted property?

A: A plat can be obtained by contacting the City of Shenandoah Administration department at 281-298-5522 or Montgomery County Clerk's office at 936-539-7885.

Q: Where can information be found on what uses are allowed on a particular property?

A: You can locate the City's Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan on the City website at [www.shenandoah.tx.us](http://www.shenandoah.tx.us). Also, please refer to the use chart 4.9.2 of the Integrated Development Code which can also be located on the City's website.

Q: How is a zoning change or a special use permit obtained on a parcel of land?

A: Apply for a zoning amendment through the Administration department at 281-298-5522.

Q: Do the requirements of a Planned Development District override the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance?

A: The provisions that are stated in the Planned Development District prevail. Any item that is not addressed in the Planned Development District will revert back to the underlying zoning district.

Q: Is new development on an existing site required to conform to the landscape ordinance?

A: The terms and provisions of the vegetation ordinance shall apply to real property within the town's corporate limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction as follows:

- All new development, construction or reconstruction requiring a building permit.
- All property with existing development as of the effective dates of the article.
- Any change of land use that results in redevelopment of a residential use to a nonresidential use.
- Any change, conversion, or additions of commercial land use that results in an increase in parking requirements.
- The total or partial demolition of a building with new construction on the same lot.
- Detention ponds that are part of any development including residential subdivision.

Exemptions:

- Single-family residential properties. Except for any landscaping installed in common areas which are to be maintained by a homeowner's association or the city and shall comply with the requirements set forth in this article.
- Substantial restoration of a building which has been damaged by fire, explosion, flood, riot or an accident of any kind.
- The remodeling of the interior of a building or the facade that does alter the location of the exterior walls.
- Infrastructure improvement or replacement projects contained entirely within a city street right-of-way.

Q: How are right-of-way dedication widths determined?

A: Right-of Way widths are established by the Thoroughfare Plan. You can receive a copy by contacting the Administration Department at 281-298-5522.

Q: Is a vehicle access easement required to be platted?

A: An access easement shall be dedicated on the plat which is dedicated to the public for unrestricted access purposes.

Q: Does an easement need to be platted for sprinkler vaults.

A: Not necessarily. It can also be filed as a separate instrument through the Montgomery County Deed Records.

Q: When is right-of-way required to be dedicated?

A: At the time of platting in accordance with the Integrated Development Code platting requirements and adopted Thoroughfare Plan.

Q: How is a reduction in off-street parking requirements obtained?

A: Reductions in parking can be reached through joint parking facilities or shared parking with neighboring businesses. Please refer to section 5.3.2 Off-Street Parking Standards in the Integrated Development Code.

Q: How is a variance from the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance obtained?

A: Multiple public hearings are required followed by a recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission. City Council will consider the recommendation after a public hearing and make a final decision. You can contact the Administration Department to request an application.

Q: Can a variance be obtained to erect a sign that is not in compliance with the Sign Code?

A: Signs that do not meet the City's Sign Ordinance are required to get a special exception request from the Sign Review Committee. If the Sign Review Committee denies the request for special exception the applicant must appeal to City Council.

Q: Can a variance or waiver be obtained to the Comprehensive Subdivision Ordinance?

A: If an applicant files an application for a variance for an item from the Integrated Development Code they will be required to go through the public hearing process. Ultimately, the Planning and Zoning Commission will make a recommendation to City Council followed by City Council making and determination

Q: How is permission obtained to perform construction during late night hours and early morning hours?

A: It is unlawful to pour a slab, demolish a building, or utilize any commercial or industrial power tools before 7:01 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m. on any day.