

Bedford Business Guide



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Introduction

The Town of Bedford has created a business guide specifically to guide them through the municipal regulatory process, such as permitting, licensing, and zoning. In planning to open your business, always remember that Bedford’s Economic Development Director, based in the Town Manager’s Office, is here to assist you with the permitting process.

While technical and regulatory reviews are essential for protecting public health and safety, Bedford strives to make the process as seamless as possible for potential businesses. As a small business, you will receive assistance and guidance as you go through various application processes, which will help ensure that the outcomes are clear and finalized as quickly as possible so you can open your business.

Who should use this Guide?

Any business that is opening in Bedford or contemplating changes to layout, signage, expansion or use. While the guide is targeted to smaller businesses and start-ups, this guide will likely be helpful for any business in Bedford, particularly any business in the retail, service, or food industries.

Getting Started

As you develop your business plan, we are happy to set up a pre-permitting consultation meeting with you at any time during your business planning process before you open for business.

Key Contacts:

Jeffrey King

Economic Development Director

781-275-1111

jmking@bedfordma.gov

Chris Laskey

Code Enforcement Director

781-275-7446

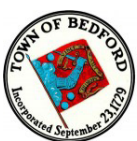
claskey@bedfordma.gov

Location:

Town Hall

10 Mudge Way

Bedford, MA 01730



People to Know in Bedford

Economic Development (Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way)	
Jeffrey King, Economic Development Director	781-275-1111 (locations, permit assistance, special events & business resources)
Chamber of Commerce	
Rob Miner Director	781-275-8503 (business development & networking)
Town Manager (Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way)	
Matthew Hanson, Town Manager	781-275-1111
Kerri Rufo, Administrative Assistant	781-275-1111 (alcohol and common victuallers licenses & special events)
Code Enforcement & Conservation (Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way)	
Chris Laskey, Director	781-275-7446 (building and sign permits, special permits & zoning)
Jeffrey Summers, Conservation Administrator	781-275-6211
Scott Gould, Department Assistant	781-275-7446 (Zoning Board of Appeals & Historic District Commission)
Board of Health (Town Center, 12 Mudge Way)	
Heidi Porter, Director	781-275-6507 (food, biosafety & hazardous materials)
Fire Department (Bedford Fire Station, 55 Great Road)	
Paul Sheehan Interim Fire Chief	781-275-7262
John Daniels, Captain	
Mark Sullivan, Captain	
Town Clerk (Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way)	
Bridget Rodrigue, Town Clerk	781-275-0083 (business certificates)
Police (2 Mudge Way)	
John Fisher, Police Chief	781-275-1212 (Non-emergency)
Planning (Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way)	
Anthony Fields, Director	781-275-1548 (special permits & site plan review)
Public Works (314 The Great Road)	
David Manugian, Director	781-275-7605 (general)
Michael Sprague, Engineer	781-275-7605 (curb cuts, utilities, drain inspections, back flow prevention & grease traps)
DPW HOURS: 8 AM-4 PM Mon-Fri	

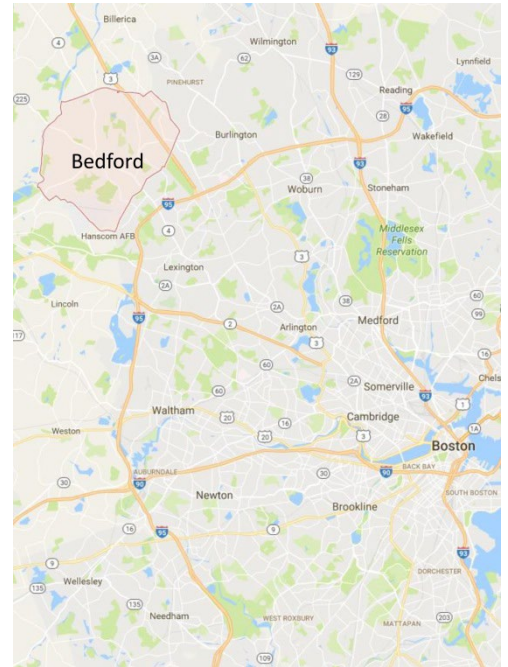
OFFICE HOURS: Monday: 8 AM to 7 PM; Tues. – Thurs.: 8 AM to 4 PM; Friday: 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM



Why Open a Business in Bedford?

Bedford is a friendly New England community, which comfortably brings together small town charm with a robust economy. Bedford welcomes new small businesses and benefits from having:

- Large primary consumer market including over **75,000 residents** from Bedford, Lexington, Concord, and Carlisle
- **Spending power of \$1.03 billion** per year by area residents
- **\$32 million in unmet demand for Full Service Restaurants**
- A **large influx of workers in the daytime** (4,000 employees in the immediate area and 10,000 military and civilians at nearby Hanscom Air Force Base) creates opportunities for new restaurants and other retail
- **Welcoming Town staff** and Permitting Assistance
- **Historic and charming Town Center** in close proximity to major employment centers
- **Networking opportunities** for businesses through the Bedford Chamber of Commerce and the Middlesex 3 Coalition
- **Research and educational institutions** including MITRE Corporation, Hanscom Air Force Base, and Middlesex Community College
- **Bike and pedestrian-friendly home** to the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, and 27 miles of hiking and bicycle trails, and scenic open spaces
- **Learn more about Bedford!** Request a copy of the Great Road Market Study Report and Residents survey at 781-275-1111



Bedford Depot Park at the Minuteman Bikeway



Opening a Business in Bedford

To Start

Contact Jeffrey King, Economic Development Director, 781-275-1111, for information about **potential locations** and **guidance on the overall permitting process**.

For Any New Business:

- Obtain a **Business Certificate** from the Town Clerk if you are not filing as a corporation with the Secretary of State (see page 9 of this guide.)
- Obtain a **Building Permit** if you are renovating a space or building a new facility or addition. (see page 10 of this guide). You can file for building permits online on the Code Enforcement website (<https://www.bedfordma.gov/code-enforcement/pages/online-permitting>). If no renovations are taking place then you only need to obtain a **Certificate of Occupancy** from the Code Enforcement Department.

Opening a Home Business

Home businesses are increasing in popularity as people seek to start up their own ventures in the innovation-based economy. All home businesses must obtain a **Home Occupation Permit** from the Code Enforcement Department. If you plan on having employees or clients come to your home, for piano lessons as an example, then you will need to obtain a **Special Permit** from the Zoning Board of Appeals before starting your business. Consult the Code Enforcement Director for more information on this process. See the Board of Health if you're preparing food of any kind.

Opening a New Office

Talk to Code Enforcement about obtaining a **Building Permit** and/or a **Sign Permit** if your proposed office site requires interior or exterior renovations, including any new or remodeled signage. Apply to the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances or special permits for relief from local zoning requirements if necessary.

Opening a Service-Based Business

Permits must be obtained from the Health Department if you plan to operate a restaurant, body art or tanning facility; a funeral home, a recreation camp for children or a public or semi-public swimming pool in Town.



Opening a Retail Store in Bedford

To Start

Contact **Jeffrey King**, Economic Development Director, 781-275-1111, for information about **potential locations** and **assistance with permitting**. Most new retail stores require the following steps:

Licenses and Permits:

- Obtain a **Business Certificate** (see page 9)
- Check with **Planning Department** to see if a site plan review is needed.
- **Zoning/Parking Review**: Consult the Code Enforcement Department at 781-275-7446 for comprehensive information on zoning and parking requirements on any particular site.
- **Building and Sign Permits**. You will need a Building Permit and a Sign Permit if your proposed site requires interior or exterior renovations and a new or remodeled sign. See pages 10 and 11 of this guide for more information of getting a Building Permit and Sign Permit.
- Unless your store is moving into an existing retail space that already has the required amount of parking, you will need to submit a **Site Plan Review** (see page 12).
- Regardless of doing remodeling or not, a **Certificate of Occupancy** from the Code Enforcement Office will need to be obtained prior to opening your business.
- If you are selling food, including pre-packaged food, please see the Health Department for a **Retail Food Permit**.



Learning Express Grand Opening.
Photo credit: Alyssa Sandoval



Is your property or business located in a **Historic District**? Any exterior changes to buildings or landscaping in the Historic District that can be viewed from a public way must be approved by the Historic District Commission before performing work. To find out whether the property is located in a historic district, please consult the Code Enforcement office.

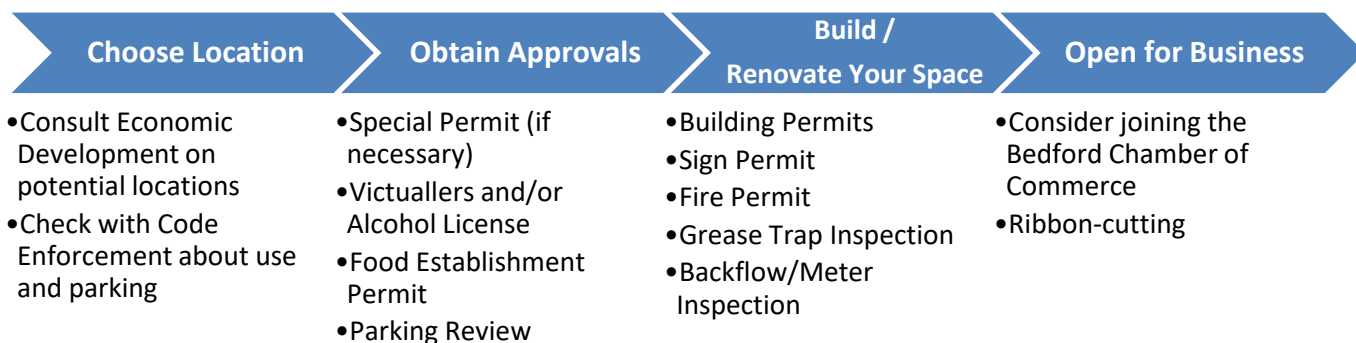


Opening a New Restaurant or Cafe in Bedford

To Start

Contact **Jeffrey King**, Economic Development Director, 781-275-1111 for information about **potential locations** and **overall guidance with the permitting process**. As with all communities in Massachusetts, starting a restaurant might involve authorizing the restaurant use in a particular location, obtaining applicable licenses and permits, and meeting health and building codes. The Town of Bedford strives to make the process as seamless and quick as possible and understands your primary goal is to have a successful business thrive and grow.

Please see the following steps for guidance on the overall process for opening a restaurant.



- **Zoning:** New Restaurants, including sit down restaurants and walk-in take-out food service establishments, in new locations in the Great Road Shawsheen, Great Road Marketplace, and Great Road North Road subdistricts are allowed by right. The Planning Board reviews special permits for new restaurants under the Depot overlay, Great Road Town Center subdistrict, and the Industrial Mixed Use provision. New restaurants within the Historic District also require Historic District Commission review and approval. See page 14 for further details on the special permit process.
- **Parking Review:** Consult the Code Enforcement Department for comprehensive information on zoning and parking requirements on any particular site. Contact: Chris Laskey, Code Enforcement Director, 781-275-7446, for guidance.
- **Building and Sign Permits.** You will need a Building Permit and a Sign Permit if your proposed site requires interior or exterior renovations and a new or remodeled sign. See pages 10 and 11 of this guide for more information of getting a Building Permit and Sign Permit.
- **Food Establishment Plan Review and Food Establishment Permit:** Apply to the Health Department for a Food Establishment Permit for serving food. Contact the Board of Health before (1) construction of a food establishment, (2) change of ownership, (3) remodeling of an establishment; (4) change in the type of food establishment or operation, such as adding outdoor seating. A Food Establishment Plan Review Application and Food Establishment Initial Permit Application can be obtained from the Health Department office. Some applications require 30-days for review.
- **Common Victuallers License /Alcoholic Beverage License:** Submit an application to the Town Manager’s Office for Select Board review for a Common Victuallers License if your restaurant



has seating for diners on the premises and for an Alcoholic Beverage License if your restaurant plans to serve alcohol. See page 13 for details on alcoholic beverages permitting.

- **Fire Safety Inspections:** Contact the Fire Department to schedule fire safety inspections for smoke detectors, fire alarms and sprinkler inspections.
- **Grease Trap, Water Meter, and Backflow Prevention Requirements:** Contact the Department of Public Works for grease trap, water meter and backflow prevention requirements.



Manager Steve Arakelian (center) meets with Red Heat Tavern's crew of waitstaff. Image (c) JMCT, 2015.

A Note on Outdoor Seating:

Providing **well-designed outdoor seating** at your restaurant can help to attract more customers and encourage customers to stay in your restaurant for a longer time, increasing the consumption of food and beverages. While the Town of Bedford encourages outdoor seating, there are procedural steps to ensure safety. If you plan on adding outdoor seating to your new restaurant, it should be included in your **Special Permit** and **Site Plan Review** from the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. If you are adding outdoor seating to a pre-existing structure, please contact Chris Laskey, the Code Enforcement Director. If your restaurant is located in the Historic District, adding outdoor seating will also require **Historic District Commission Review**.



Outdoor Dining at Ken's New York Deli.
Photo credit: Adam Schwartz.



Opening a Biotech Company in Bedford

Bedford is home to a rapidly growing cluster of biotechnology companies. There are currently over 30 life sciences companies in Bedford, making up one-third of all technology companies in Bedford. Bedford is a Platinum-rated “BioReady®” community by the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council.



Dr. Erika Ebbel Angel (left) in the Lab with her staff at Ixcela: the internal fitness company.
Photo credit: Alyssa Sandoval.

To Start

Contact **Jeffrey King**, Economic Development Director, 781-275-1111, for information about **potential locations** and **guidance on the overall permitting process**.

Permits:

- Obtain a **Business Certificate** (if needed) (see page 9)
- Obtain a **Building Permit** (page 10)
- Will your company use biological agent(s)? If so, you must obtain a **Biosafety Regulations Permit** from the Board of Health.
- Will your company have hazardous or flammable materials? If so, you must obtain a **Hazardous Materials or Flammable Storage Permit** from the Fire Department and create a **Hazardous Materials Contingency Plan** for submittal to the Board of Health.
- Will your company store hazardous materials, liquid petroleum products or use diesel-powered generators? You may need an **Aquifer Special Permit** from the Bedford Select Board if the location is within an aquifer protection zone. Contact **Chris Laskey**, Code Enforcement Director, 781-275-7446, to determine whether you are located within an aquifer protection zone.
- You must obtain a **Fire Alarm Permit** and/or a **Fire Protection Permit** from the Fire Department.
- Contact the Department of Public Works to review water and sewer utility connections and confirm system capacities .



Business Certificate

What is a Business Certificate?

Commonly referred to as a DBA (“doing business as”) a Business Certificate is the public record of the name and address of the owner(s) of a business. Its purpose is primarily for customer protection and public information. Lenders will request a copy of your Business Certificate.

Who Must File a Business Certificate?

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 110, §5 states that any person conducting business in the Commonwealth under any title other than the real name of the person conducting the business, whether individually or as a partnership, shall file (a certificate) in the office of the clerk of every city or town where an office of any such person or partnership may be situated.

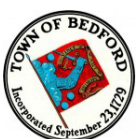
Under Chapter 110, §6 a business certificate is not required if a corporation is doing business in its true corporate name, or if a partnership is doing business under any title which includes the true surname of any partner. Certain other associations and partnerships may also be exempt. Businesses who file with the Secretary of State’s Office do **not** need to file in Bedford.

How Do I File or Renew My Business Certificate?

Business Certificates can be obtained at the Town Clerk’s office in Town Hall at 10 Mudge Way. If you are using your residence as your business address then you must first obtain a **Home Occupation Form** from the Code Enforcement Department. This can be obtained provided that the owner filing for the business certificate is proven to be a resident at that address and meets the requirements for a home business. After obtaining the Home Occupation Form, you can obtain a business certificate at the Town Clerk’s Office in Town Hall. Certain circumstances may require a Special Permit form the Zoning Board of Appeals.

What Do I Do If I Discontinue My Business or Move to Another Location?

If you are no longer in business or you move out of the town, you should file a Discontinuance from Business Form obtained at the office of the Town Clerk. This should be done as soon as possible as personal property taxes on your business cannot be adjusted until the Assessors receive your withdrawal form. It is effective from the date that you file this form, **not** the date you terminated your business. You should file **before** the date of expiration.



Building Permit

What is a Building Permit?

Building Permits are issued to Licensed Contractors to enable construction work on a specific property. Consult a licensed professional to review your location and plan any construction. When applicable, only a Massachusetts-registered architect or professional engineer may stamp plans.

Do I Need a Building Permit?

Even if your company is moving into a preexisting location, it is possible that you will need a Building Permit. A Building Permit is required for any form of **construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair** of a building or other structure. Any changes to the electrical or plumbing layout of the building will require an **Electrical Permit** and a **Plumbing Permit**. Even if you are doing no work, a Certificate of Occupancy is needed to assess existing building systems and make sure they are being maintained properly.

Where Do I Get a Building Permit?

A Building Permit can be obtained from the Code Enforcement Department. The Building Inspectors accept the building permit applications, review and approve them. They follow the permit from start to finish which could include multiple inspections from excavation to rough to final, depending on the type of permit and the extent of the work to be performed. Other permits, such as fire or sewer permits, may be required before you can obtain a Building Permit.

How Do I Get a Building Permit?

- **Application:** You can file for building permits online on the Code Enforcement website <https://www.bedfordma.gov/172/Online-Permitting> or at the Code Enforcement Department at Town Hall.
- **Steps:** After submittal and review of your Application and Plans, a Building Permit can be issued. Elements of construction such as mechanical, plumbing and electrical will be permitted separately. Periodic inspections must be scheduled as elements of the project are completed. A final inspection and review are necessary for a Certificate of Occupancy.
- **Certificate of Occupancy:** After your Building Permit work is completed, the project will receive a Certificate of Occupancy, which is required to occupy the building.



A **nonconforming** building is any existing structure that does not meet the current requirements, bylaws, or limitations of the zoning district that it is located in. Older buildings, such as those that have been constructed before Bedford's zoning came into effect, are often nonconforming buildings.



Sign Permit

What is a Sign Permit?

A **Sign Permit** allows a business to install an awning, wall, or freestanding sign on their property. This permit covers *permanent* signs for private businesses; for special event signage involving non-profit events, contact the Town Manager's office at 781-275-1111.

Who Needs a Sign Permit?

Any private business (including non-profits) must obtain a Sign Permit before installing any signage on its property.

Where Do I Get a Sign Permit?

With the exception of Special Event signage, a Sign Permit can be obtained from the Code Enforcement Office. Signs are permitted in the Town according to the Sign Bylaw ([Bedford-Sign-Bylaw--Article-39-of-the-Bedford-General-Bylaws-PDF \(bedfordma.gov\)](#)) Additional approval may be necessary from the Historic District Commission and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals. See guidance below for details.

How Do I Get a Sign Permit?

The Code Enforcement Office issues sign permits. Applicants should follow these steps:

- **Application:** You can file for sign permits online on the Code Enforcement website <https://www.bedfordma.gov/172/Online-Permitting> or at the Code Enforcement Department at Town Hall.
- If the proposed sign is going to be illuminated, is oversized, on the second-floor or higher, and/or otherwise requires a Special Permit then the applicant must file a separate application to the Zoning Board of Appeals to seek *approval* from the Board before the sign permit can be issued. If approved then the applicant must record the Zoning Board of Appeal's written decision at the Registry of Deeds and a receipt of such recording must be submitted with the sign permit application.
- If the proposed sign is for a property located within the Historic District then the applicant must file a separate application to the Historic District Commission to seek *approval* from the Commission before the sign permit can be issued. The application is filed at the Code Enforcement Office at Town Hall, 10 Mudge Way. If approved, the Commission's Notice of Determination must be submitted with the sign permit application.
- Once all of these procedures have been followed, the sign permit can be issued by the Code Enforcement Office. There is no expiration date for a sign permit.



Window signs and sandwich board signs. Most business signs require a sign permit with the exception of smaller signs in windows advertising special events or promotions as long as the sign does not cover more than 25% of the window area. Moveable Freestanding signs (i.e. A-frame or sandwich board signs) require a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. For further details, speak with the Code Enforcement office.



Site Plan Review

What is Site Plan Review?

Site Plan Review is a comprehensive review of proposed projects that may have significant impacts on traffic, parking, municipal and public services and utilities, environmental quality, community economics, and community values.



Who Needs Site Plan Review?

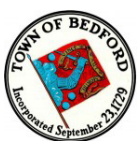
Site Plan Review is required for any new construction or addition/alteration of a building that adds more than 200 sq.ft. to the building's gross floor area. It can also be triggered when parking, loading and/or vehicular access aisles are established or substantially changed. See section 7.5 of the Zoning Bylaw for more specific detail.

Who Conducts Site Plan Review?

The Planning Board reviews Site Plan Applications with assistance from the Code Enforcement Department and Department of Public Works. The Planning Board may also seek input from Fire, Police, Board of Health or Conservation Commission depending on the specific proposal.

How Do I Get Site Plan Approval?

- **Application:** You will need to submit your application, site plan, and supporting materials to the Planning Department, with a fee (currently 1/10th of one percent of estimated constructed cost, with a minimum \$500 and maximum of \$5,000) The process and submission requirements are contained in the Site Plan Rules and Regulations, found here: [Site-Plan-Rules-Regulations-Effective-December-14-2021-PDF \(bedfordma.gov\)](https://bedfordma.gov/Site-Plan-Rules-Regulations-Effective-December-14-2021-PDF)
- **Public Meeting:** The Planning Board will invite you to a public meeting within 2 to 4 weeks of receipt of your application, where you will have the opportunity to describe your project to the Board. This review is an administrative function and does not constitute a formal public hearing. The Board will typically render its decisions on your site plan within 4 to 6 weeks after receipt.
- **Site Plan Approval:** Following Planning Board review, a written record of the decision will be filed with the Town Clerk and distributed to the reviewing departments for review of subsequent building permits.



Alcoholic Beverage License

What is an Alcoholic Beverage License?

An **Alcoholic Beverage License** allows an establishment to distribute alcoholic beverages through retail pouring or beverage sales.

Who Needs an Alcoholic Beverage License?

Any business that sells, stores, distributes, serves or delivers alcohol must have an Alcoholic Beverage License.

Where Do I Get an Alcoholic Beverage License?

In order to obtain an Alcoholic Beverage License, the license must be approved by the Select Board as well as the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC). The Select Board acting as the local licensing board, will ultimately issue the license.

How Do I Get an Alcoholic Beverage License?

The application process and forms vary depending on the type of alcoholic beverage license sought. You are strongly encouraged to consult the Town Manager's Office at 781-275-1111 to determine which forms and process you need to complete and for overall guidance. The application forms can be found on the ABCC's website at <http://www.mass.gov/abcc/forms.htm>.

Fees

Fees are payable to the ABCC with the application. There is also a local filing fee with the Town of Bedford. Once the license is approved, the license fee must be paid to the Town. The process is outlined below:

Application: Complete the appropriate online application on ABCC's website and then print and sign it. Submit the application to the Town Manager's Office for Select Board review. The application will be posted as an agenda item for a Select Board meeting. You will need to appear before the Select Board at that time.

Local and State Review: The Select Board will review your application and determine whether to approve it at the local level. If it does approve the application, the Select Board will forward the application to the state ABCC for its approval. The state ABCC review can take up to 3 months so ensure you allow time for this review. Once approved by the ABCC, the Select Board will issue you the Alcoholic Beverage License.



There is a limited number of alcohol licenses that can be issued in Bedford based on state-approved quotas. Check with the Town Manager's Office for availability.



Special Permit

In certain cases, the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals must first issue a **Special Permit** for a particular use or uses before a building permit can be issued.

What Is Special Permit?

A special permit is a permit to use property for a certain use or uses that typically have higher impacts, such as traffic, water consumption, sewer generation, environment, or uses hazardous materials. Examples of such uses include commercial recreation, or some restaurants or mixed-use developments.

Who Needs to Get a Special Permit?

Some Special Permits are required to allow a commercial or residential development in a certain area of town designed within specific guidelines approved by the Town while others are needed when changes are made to a pre-existing, non-conforming business or property.

Who Approves Special Permits?

The Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) review and approve petitions/application for Special Permits. Each board has jurisdiction for different specific uses

How Do I Get a Special Permit?

The process for obtaining a Special Permit generally follows these steps:

- **Consultation:** You are encouraged to consult with the Code Enforcement Department to determine which board has jurisdiction and complete the appropriate application form(s).
- **Application:** In addition to the application form, supporting materials such as a site plan, floor plan, landscaping plan, architectural renderings, drainage analysis and/or traffic study may be required. There will also be an application fee, which varies depending on the proposed use. Check with Planning Department or Code Enforcement for submittal requirements.
- **Public Hearing:** Special Permit petitions are reviewed through a public hearing process. Once the respective board has scheduled a hearing date, a legal notice is published in a local newspaper at least 14 days prior to the hearing, and notice must be given to abutters with 300 feet of your property. It is important to allow up to 5 weeks between the time of application to the public hearing for public noticing requirements.

Please be aware that the State allows the respective Board to take up to sixty-five (65) days to hear your petition and up to ninety (90) days from the close of the hearing to either approve or deny your petition. Once the decision is filed with the Town Clerk, there us a statutory 20-day appeal period, after which the decision needs to be filed with the Middlesex Registry of Deeds



Special Events

What is a Special Event?

A **Special Event** is any temporary meeting or organized gathering coordinated by a private entity that uses private and/or public property. If your business plans on holding any sort of event that is open to the public, you may need special permits for the occasion. For overall assistance, please contact Jeffrey King, Economic Development Director, at 781-275-1111.

Permits:

- Do you plan on serving food at your event? If so, you will need a Food Event Application from the Board of Health (phone: 781-275-6507).
- Do you plan on serving alcohol at your event? If so, you will need a One Day Special Liquor License from the Select Board. The event application is available at the Town Manager's Office at 10 Mudge Way or online at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/town-manager>.
- Do you plan on using a temporary sign to advertise your event? If so, you will need a Sign Temporary Permit from the Bedford Select Board. The sign application is available at the Town Manager's Office at 10 Mudge Way or online at <http://www.bedfordma.gov/town-manager>.
- Are you planning a parade or large outdoor program for your event? If so, you will need a Parade/Event Permit from the Bedford Police Department (phone: 781-275-1212).



Innovations Nights Event at MITRE Corporation.
Photo credit: Maureen Sullivan.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What if I like the space the way it is and don't plan on doing any work except painting?

Answer: If the work you are performing does not trigger any building code or zoning requirements then you would be required to file an application for a Certificate of Occupancy. Once filed, you should request an inspection of the tenant space by the building inspector approximately one (1) week prior to opening; there are times when an inspection by other inspectors and/or departments are needed as well such as backflow or meter inspection by the Department of Public Works. During the inspection the building inspector will be looking at the existing building elements to determine if they are being properly maintained such as exit doors, exit signs, emergency lights, fire extinguishers, etc. If any building element is in disrepair then it will be required to be repaired/replaced and re-inspected prior to opening your business. Please see the Code Enforcement Department and Department of Public Works for further assistance.

2. I'm thinking of putting up a wall sign. Do I need a permit to do this?

Answer: Yes. **Art.39.3, s.1(A)** of the Bedford Sign Bylaw (found under Article 39 of the General Bylaws) requires a permit to be issued by the Building Inspector prior to erecting, re-erecting, constructing or altering any sign. There are certain criteria that controls the size, number and placement of any given wall sign for a business so please be sure to review **Art.39.4, s.3(A)** to establish what criteria best fits your situation; additional/other criteria may apply if your business is located in a Commercial District or an Industrial District. Please note that under certain circumstances you may be required to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals and/or the Historic District Commission for additional approvals. Please see the Code Enforcement Department for further assistance.

3. I want my sign illuminated. Are there any special requirements to do this?

Answer: Yes, you need a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for any illumination of signs. See **Art.39.5, s.1(A)** of the Sign Bylaw for more details or check in with the Code Enforcement Department. Internally-illuminated signs are only allowed in the Industrial Districts.

4. I'm thinking about staying open 24 hours. Can my sign stay on all night?

Answer: No, unless approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Under **Art.39.5, s.3** of the Bedford Sign Bylaw, no sign shall be illuminated between the hours of 11 pm and 6 am. This



provision is strictly enforced so please be aware that if you are using an automatic timer to control the illumination of your sign then a power loss will affect the timer mechanism and it would need to be reset.

5. I'm thinking about having a big sale. Can I put an A-frame sign or temporary lawn sign outside to advertise the sale?

Answer: When approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals, one A-frame or Movable Freestanding Sign is allowed for your business; otherwise these types of signs are not allowed. If approved, these signs must adhere to certain criteria as outlined under **Art.39.4, s.3(Q)** of the Bedford Sign Bylaws. The length of time for going through the approval process is on average 6 weeks. Please see the Code Enforcement Department for further assistance.

6. Can I have additional signage besides my wall sign?

Answer: Yes. **Art.39.4, s.3** of the Bedford Sign Bylaw allows one (1) freestanding sign on each lot. There is certain criteria that controls the size and placement of any given freestanding sign for a business so please be sure to review **Art.39.4, s.3(B)** to establish what criteria best fits your situation; additional/other criteria may apply if your business is located in a Commercial District or an Industrial District. Please note that under certain circumstances you may be required to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Historic District Commission and/or the Conservation Commission for additional approvals.

Art.39.4, s.3 of the Bedford Sign Bylaw also addresses awning signs, projecting signs, banners as well as other types of signs; certain signs have specific criteria that must be complied with so please review this section to see what best fits your situation. Additional/other criteria may apply if your business is located in a Commercial District or an Industrial District.

7. If I do have to renovate the tenant space, can I do the work myself?

No. Under **s.110.R5** of the MA Building Code, 780 CMR, an individual must be properly licensed as a Construction Supervisor to perform the work and/or supervise others when working in a commercial and/or multi-unit residential building. When the work is completed under the building permit and all work has been approved by the inspector(s) then a Certificate of Occupancy is issued to identify the new tenant within that space. Please see the Code Enforcement Department for further assistance.

8. I'm planning on selling food for consumption. What should I do?



Answer: Please check with the Board of Health to review permits required for food.

9. I would like to have live music at my restaurant or café. Do I need a special license for this?

Answer: You will need a Sunday Entertainment license from the Select Board for live music on Sundays only. For live music on other days, you do not need a special license but must adhere to the Town noise bylaw.

