

HOME OWNER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When do I need a building permit?

For all home renovation and construction, except: painting, siding and window replacement, and fences under 6 feet tall. Permits are required for decks, sheds, in ground and above ground pools, hot tubs, and the addition or relocation of any plumbing or electrical fixture. Call Building Inspection for questions and assistance at 497-8990, ext 114, or visit the Planning Office in Town Hall. Application forms are also available on line at www.goffstown.com.

What is a CO?

A Certificate of Occupancy is the final document issued by the Building Inspector indicating that all of his inspections have been satisfactorily completed and that the project is, therefore, completed. The project's lender typically wants to see this document.

Where can I find copies of the codes that relate to development?

Copies of Goffstown's Zoning Ordinance and of the Planning Board's Development Regulations may be found at the Planning Office in Town Hall or on line at www.goffstown.com. Building codes may be found at the Building Inspector's office in Town Hall and at the Goffstown Public Library.

May I keep horses or chickens?

The raising of livestock and poultry is controlled by the Zoning Ordinance and depends, therefore, upon where your home is located. It is permitted in the Agricultural District or Conservation or Open Space District. In the Residential-1 and Residential-2 districts it requires a Special Exception approval of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. For questions or assistance, call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer @ 497-8990, ext 119. It is also recommended that you utilize "best management practices", which may be found on line at <http://extension.unh.edu/Pubs/PubsHG.htm>, and please respect your neighbors.

Is my neighbor operating a kennel?

A commercial kennel is controlled by the Zoning Ordinance and is defined as "a property where any number of dogs are domiciled for a fee, or from which dogs are regularly sold as a business." Call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer for questions @ 497-8990, ext 119.

May I operate a home business?

A "home occupation" is controlled by the Zoning Ordinance. It must be carried out within the home and is defined as incidental and secondary to the home and operated in a manner that does not adversely affect the residential character of the neighborhood. It must be registered at the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer at Town Hall, where the specific ordinance requirements may be checked. A sign for a home occupation requires a sign permit from the same office. Call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer for questions @ 497-8990, ext 119.

What about my driveway?

Installing a new driveway, changing a driveway where it meets the road, or changing from a gravel to asphalt surface requires a Driveway Permit from the Public Works Department, located at 404 Elm Street. Call Public Works at 497-3617 for questions. Re-sealing your driveway does not require a Driveway Permit.

What is a wetland and the Wetland and Surface Water Conservation District?

Wetlands are areas identified by NH Certified Wetland Scientist as being inundated or saturated by water to the extent that there is a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. A Wetland and Surface Water Conservation District is that area including surface waters and wetlands, with a 100-foot buffer.

What is prohibited in the Wetland and Surface Water Conservation District?

The Zoning Ordinance specifically prohibits (1) any changes to the surface of the land, (2) removal of any vegetation and (3) building or placing any structure within the District. Section 13.3.6 of the Ordinance does list some allowed uses within this District, but with conditions.

How do I know where utility lines are before I dig?

Call Dig Safe at 1-800-Dig-Safe).

What if my septic system needs replacement?

A replacement of your leach field requires a permit and an inspection from the Building Inspector. If a system is to be changed in design or size, it will require a new design by a licensed designer, as well as state approval and inspection. Call Building Inspection for questions 497-8990, ext 114.

What permit do I need for a well?

A Building Permit is required as there are both plumbing and electrical service changes with a new well. The completed well must also be tested for bacteria. Other tests are optional. Remember also that a well must be at least 75 feet from the road right-of-way (which is usually 16 feet beyond the pavement), your septic leach field or your property boundary.

Registering a vehicle?

For information, contact the Town Clerk at 497-8990, Ext 109, or visit Town Hall.

What is my tax assessment and how is it calculated? Do I qualify for a veteran's tax credit or an elderly tax assessment credit?

For information, contact the Assessor @ 497-8990, Ext 103, or visit Town Hall.

Tax collection problems?

For information, contact the Tax Collector at 497-8990, Ext 110, or visit Town Hall.

I'm also in a condominium?

In addition to town requirements, approvals and permits, also check your condominium by-laws and with your condominium association for any regulations that it might have, or for any approvals that the association might require.

BUSINESS OWNER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does Goffstown license businesses?

No. Do be aware, however, that the State may have registration, licensing, facility, operational and inspection requirements affecting your business.

Where might I operate my business?

This is controlled by Zoning Ordinance. Generally, most businesses may be operated in the various Commercial or Industrial districts. Some however, require Special Exceptions granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals or Conditional Use Permits granted by the Planning Board. Call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer @ 497-8990, ext 119, or the Planning Office @ 497-8990, Ext 118, for questions. Applications for both Special Exceptions and Conditional Use Permits are available at the Planning Office in Town Hall or on the web at www.goffstown.com. The former takes about 30 days and the latter about 60 days for application filing and Board action, except when a site plan review process is also required, though they, the conditional use permit and the site plan review, may be combined into one process.

Is a site plan review required for my business?

The answer is probably no for an existing building, if (1) an approved site plan exists and (2) your business will not cause an increase in site impact or parking. Typically, for example, non-automotive retail uses and office uses have the same impact, while restaurants and medical facilities have increased parking demands. Going, for example, from one retail use to another would not require a new site plan, while going from a retail use to a restaurant use would. If a site plan review is required, an application is available at the Planning Office in Town Hall or on the web at www.goffstown.com. The site plan review process typically takes 60-90 days, except for controversial proposals, for application filing and Planning Board action. Call the Planning Office for questions or assistance at 497-8990, Ext 118, or visit Town Hall.

Is a building permit required for my business's fit-up?

All renovation and construction, except: painting, siding and window replacement, shelving and fences under 6 feet tall, require a building permit. Permits are also required for the addition or relocation of any plumbing or electrical fixture. Call Building Inspection for questions or assistance at 497-8990, ext 114, or visit Town Hall.

What is a CO?

A Certificate of Occupancy is the final document issued by the Building Inspector indicating that all of the building inspections have been satisfactorily completed and that the project is, therefore, completed. The project's lender typically wants to see this document.

What signs may I have?

The number, size and location of signs are controlled by the Zoning Ordinance. In all cases, a sign permit is required from the Building Department, which typically takes 2 days. In Goffstown's village, sign permit approval is by the Planning Board, which may take up to a month. Call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer for questions and assistance @ 497-8990, ext 119, or visit Town Hall.

What about outside display of merchandise?

The zoning ordinance allows out door display, with condition, in only some of the commercial districts, so first, it should be checked.

May I utilize the public sidewalk?

Any private use of public property requires Board of Selectmen approval. Such a request might be initiated at the Planning Office or the Town Administrator.

How do I get my utilities?

All, except single-family homes, are required to utilize private trash collection and disposal services. Other utilities, like electric, telephone, on-line access are also provided by private entities.

Public water, where available, is provided by either the Village Water Precinct at 183 North Mast (497-3621), the Grasmere Village Water Precinct at 41 Center Street (497-8346), or Manchester Water Works. Public Sewer, where available, is provided by the Goffstown Sewer Commission at Town Hall (497-8990, ext 116).

What annual inspections should I expect?

The Town's Building Inspector at Town Hall (497-8990, ext 114) will inspect day care facilities every three years. The Fire Department Fire Prevention Officer at 18 Church Street (497-3619) will make annual inspection of restaurants, establishments serving alcohol, places of assembly and businesses utilizing hazardous materials.

The State will have its own health and other inspection schedules for restaurants and the other uses that it regulates.

What is my process for constructing new buildings?

The first issue is the zoning ordinance relative to your proposed use and any included development standards. Changes in zoning are only done by the March Town Meeting, while variances to the ordinance may be granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Applications for a variance proposal may be found at the planning Office in Town Hall or on line at www.goffstown.com. The variance process may take 30 days for application filing and Board action. Call the Zoning Code Enforcement Officer for questions @ 497-8990, ext 119.

The second step is the site plan review process through the Planning Board, which is described above. A subdivision may also be required, to create the desired parcel of land, or to incorporate condominium ownership. This process also goes through the Planning Board, but may be concurrent with a site plan. Both site plan and subdivision reviews utilize an Application for Development Review, which is available at the Planning Office in town Hall or on line at www.goffstown.com. For questions about these steps, call the Planning Office at 497-8990, ext 118, or visit Town Hall.

The final stage is construction, which requires a building permit, and inspections, culminating in issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Building permit applications are available at Town Hall or on line at www.goffstown.com. For questions about these steps, call the Building Inspector at 497-8990, ext 115, or visit Town Hall.

Where might I get other assistance?

Goffstown Economic Development Council

www.goffstownnh.gov

Town Hall, 16 Main Street

Goffstown, NH 03045

Phone: (603) 497-8990, ext 118

Goffstown Main Street Program

www.goffstownmainstreet.org

7 Main Street

Goffstown, NH 03045

Phone: (603) 497-9933

SCORE

www.score.org

Norris Cotton Federal Building

275 Chestnut Street, Suite 133

Manchester, NH 03101

Phone: (603) 666-7561

MicroCredit NH

www.microcreditnh.org

7 Wall St.

Concord, NH 03301

David Hamel, area representative

Phone: (603) 620-0319

NH Small Business Development Center

www.nhsbdc.org

33 S Commercial St

Manchester, NH 03101

Phone: (603) 624-2000

CRDC (Capitol Regional Development Corporation)

www.crdc-nh.com

PO Box 664

91 N. State Street, Suite 101

Concord, NH 03302

Ph: (603) 228-1872

NH Department of Resources and Economic Development

NH Division of Economic Development and
NH Business Resource Center

www.nheconomy.com

172 Pembroke Road

P.O. Box 1856

Concord, NH 03302-1856

Phone: (603) 271-2591