



## New Bedford Health Department FAQs

Updated 4/23/2025

### Why is permitting important?

The New Bedford Health Departments and many health departments across the state issue permits to ensure the public's health and safety. Permits for food establishments and other businesses can have potential health risks, by ensuring compliance with state regulations and standards, permits help guarantee the safety of food, water, and the environment. Permits help to protect individuals and communities from diseases and health hazards.

### What permits are issued by the New Bedford Health Department?

The New Bedford Health Department, or NBHD, is the issuing body for:

#### Body Art (Renews Fiscally)

- **Body Art Establishment** -If new, must also meet with Inspectional Services, Zoning and Fire
- **Body Art Practitioner** - tattooing, piercing, and micropigmentation
- **Body Art Apprentice** – someone who has never performed body art tattooing, piercing and/ or micropigmentation within a licensed Body Art Establishment.
- **Body Art Guest** artists (min 5 days-14 days)

#### Garbage Hauler (Renews Annually)

- **Garbage / Offal hauler** - Any commercial truck transporting garbage/offal servicing residents in the city of New Bedford

#### Food Protection Program

- **Farmer's Market** - Food vendors from residential or commercial licensed kitchens looking to sell pre-packaged non TCS goods at local Farmer's Markets throughout City. (Renews Annually)
- **Food establishment** – Any retail, restaurant or business providing food to the public, including but not limited to convenience stores, restaurants, bars, non-profit organizations, food pantries, etc. (Renews Fiscally)
- **Food (mobile) truck permits** - Canteen trucks, push carts, ice cream trucks, food trailers and food trucks providing food to the public on wheels. (Renews Mar 1<sup>st</sup> – Feb)

- **Frozen Desserts License** - Any business looking to provide pasteurized milk (soft serve) dispensed through a machine in frozen form. (Renews Mar 1<sup>st</sup> – Feb)
- **Temporary Food Events** - Any public event occurring in the city on public or private property intending to sell or provide food that is not pre-packaged and requires refrigeration (Must submit 14 days prior to date of event).

### Minimum Housing

- **E-2 Demo for rodents** -Permit issued as part of the Inspectional Services Demolition of structure, must provide pest control plan for pre, during and after demolition.
- **Housing pre-rental vouchers** – Inspection request by a landlord to assess dwelling unit and issue a certificate passing said unit meeting minimum housing standards.
- **Rooming House License** -A residential dwelling that provides a shared common kitchen and/or bathroom to four or more people not related, this also requires a license with the Licensing Department, Inspectional Services Department and Fire Prevention Bureau. (Renews Annually)
- **Voucher - Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher**
- **Department of Early Education and Care Inspection**

### Recreation (Summer) Camps

- **Recreational Camps** - Summer camps operating between June 1<sup>st</sup>– Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. (Renews Annually)

### Swimming Pool

- **Swimming Pool/Wading/ Special Purpose Pool** -Any pool(wading/special purpose pool) in the city that for its use is available to the public, in a public building or semi-public area. (Renews Annually)

### Tanning

- **Tanning Facilities** – A business that provides tanning beds for public use. (Renews Annually)

### Title 5 (Septic System)

- **Disposal Work Installer** -Licensed business who will be installing, repairing, or abandoning septic systems. (Renews Annually)
- **Septage Hauler Trucks** - Any commercial tank/trailer transporting septage/grey water servicing or disposing in the City. (Renews Annually)
- **Percolation Test** – Proposed soil evaluation for a title 5 septic system
- **Title 5** – Construction, repair, or abandonment of a septic system

### Tobacco

- **Tobacco License** - Licenses cannot be transferred to another location, and licenses must obtain MA DOR licenses prior to applying for a local tobacco/nicotine license. Cannot obtain new tobacco license unless current location has a valid tobacco license. (Renews Annually)

## Trailer Camp/ Manufactured home lot

- **Trailer Camp/ Manufactured homesite Permit** – Any dealer/ owner who provides space of land to manufactured homes (Renews Annually)

## How can I apply for a permit?

Homeowners, applicants, and contractors can submit applications online through Open Gov, which allows users to submit forms, pay fees and track approval progress. You can also apply by going to the New Bedford Health Department office, 1213 Purchase Street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor on the left, large glass window, where someone can assist you.

For more information and permit related questions, please contact the New Bedford Health Department during normal business hours, weekdays 8:00am – 4:00pm, 508-991-6199.

## Who can apply for a permit?

The New Bedford Health Department issues permits/licenses to business owners, contractors, and homeowners.

## What do I need to apply for a permit/license for the NBHD?

Each permit has different requirements.

All licenses/permits must submit the **Worker's compensation affidavit** [Worker's Compensation Affidavit Link](#) (fillable form also available within the application attachments

- If applicable, also include the Certificate of Insurance that includes the worker's comp policy number and expiration date.

## Food Protection Program

[Retail food, Regulations, information and FAQs | Mass.gov](#)     [105 CMR 500 Good Manufacturing Practices for Food](#)

- **Food Establishment:** Must follow [105 CMR 590.000](#) regulation
  - Certified Food Protection Manager, Allergen Certificate (MA Allergen only acceptable course) Names must be the same for both certificates and have validity of 5 years.
  - CPR for seats over 25
  - If new/ turnkey: Floor Plan/ Layout of building with flow of food, all food equipment and locations of bathroom, and sinks.
  - If turnkey, Statement of no changes if there are no changes to building structure, electrical, and plumbing.
  - Lease or Purchase and Sale agreement
  - Photos or Specification documents of current food equipment or proposed equipment (photo should include a photo of the entire unit as well as data plate that has NSF/ANSI on it).

- If you are a licensed establishment and planning to cater a private event in the City, fill and submit this form - [Caterer's Notification Form](#)
- **Temporary Food Event Vendors** [Retail Food Code Standards for Food Establishments at Events and Farmers Markets | Mass.gov](#)
  - License of commissary/base of operation/residential kitchen where food is prepared.
  - Service agreement if using licensed establishment to prepare Time/Temperature for control foods for event.
  - Certified Food Manager and Allergen Certificate when providing/preparing Time/Temperature for safety foods, this includes but is not limited to cutting fruits/vegetables, marinating/cutting/thawing meat, poultry, and seafood.
    - Names must be the same for both certificates and have validity of 5 years.
  - Menu
  - Layout of booth
  - If operating out of a food truck, provide:
    - Food truck registration
    - Certificate of Insurance for General Liability
    - Photos of truck/ equipment
- **Farmers Market** [Retail Food Code Standards for Food Establishments at Events and Farmers Markets | Mass.gov](#)
  - Follow all requirements under Temporary Food Event Vendors but must have all food products portioned and pre-packaged with proper label requirements.
    - Cannot sell any final product that may be Time/Temperature control for Safety food (cream cheese filling or adding cheeses to top of baked good products, filled pastries using fresh/frozen fruits).
- **Frozen Dessert** [Licensing and Testing Requirements for Frozen Desserts No: DU-01](#)
  - If new, Specifications of proposed equipment that will be mixing soft serve pasteurized products from an approved pasteurized vendor.
  - Submit monthly lab testing from an approved licensed lab testing Coliform and Aerobic/Standard Plate count.
- **Food Truck/Mobile Food/Push Carts/ Ice Cream Truck/ Food Trailer**
  - [Food Truck City Ordinance Sec.15-72](#)
  - [Mobile Food Establishment Questions and Answers](#)
  - Apply/ renew [Hawker and Peddler Application | Mass.gov](#)
  - Mobile Food Vehicle Registration and insurance
  - Liability Insurance covering the business with City of New Bedford as License Holder
  - Menu
  - If new, pictures of unit, inside and out, including equipment.
  - Specifications of proposed equipment
  - License/ID of all staff/volunteers who will be on unit.
  - Certified Food Protection Manager and Allergen Certificate
    - Names must be the same for both certificates and have validity of 5 years.

## Body Art

### [New Bedford Board of Health Body Art Regulations](#)

- **Body Art Establishment**
  - If new, Floor Plan/layout of bathrooms, janitorial sink, storage rooms, waiting area and artist area.
  - SDS sheets of inks and chemicals used in the facility.
  - After care documentation with Establishments' information provided to the client
  - Client registration form with all required criteria
  - Purchase and sale/ Lease of building
  - Zoning Approval Letter - Zoning Board
  - Occupancy Permit – Department of Inspectional Services
  - Procedures for incident of bloodborne pathogen exposure
  - Hazardous Waste disposal contract
  - If using, Equipment specifications for Auto Clave/Ultrasonic Machine
  - Professional Liability Policy, certificate of insurance, that names all licensed practitioners at the location.
  
- **Body Art Practitioner**
  - Two forms of Identification (passport, license, birth certificate)
  - SDS sheet of ink used if different than establishment.
  - Bloodborne pathogen cert
  - CPR/First Aid – must be in person for initial exam.
  - Skin Disease – course is currently only available through [Save Each Life](#) website, in person class.
  - Anatomy course - piercers (college credit A&P I &II or go to [Save Each Life](#)).
  - Micropigmentation (Microblading/ Cosmetic tattooing certificates should come from a company that is a member of Society of Permanent Cosmetic Professionals (<https://www.spcp.org/>) or American Academy of Micropigmentation (<https://micropigmentation.org/>).
  - 3 former licenses where practitioner has been prior, this may include Apprenticeship License.
  - Tuberculosis (TB) skin test, if applicant has had TB in the past fill out [Body Art Tuberculosis Symptom Screening-Questionnaire](#).
  - If a new applicant, routine medical exam of applicant, template can be supplied if summary cannot be provided.
  
- **Guest Artist:**
  - Must follow the same requirements as the **Practitioners**.
  - Performing Body Art in the City for minimum of 5 days and no more than 14 days. If the applicant believes that they will be back more than two visits an annual Practitioners license is recommended.
  
- **Apprentice:**

- If you have never performed Body Art or received a license from another city, state, or county, you must complete an apprenticeship with an approved **Practitioner**.
- Each city, town, state or county has their own Body Art Regulations. If you began an apprenticeship at an **Establishment** not located in New Bedford, you must restart the process.
- Must work out of a licensed **Establishment** and supervised by a **Practitioner** approved by the BOH prior to doing any Tattooing, Piercing and/ or any form of cosmetic tattooing of the face (microblading/micropigmentation).
- Must follow the same requirements as the **Practitioners**.
  - Will provide agreement between the licensed **Practitioner** and prospective **Apprentice**, template available at NBHD.
    - Note: A Practitioner cannot have more than one apprentice at a time
  - Can obtain Apprentices task list from Environmental Health Division of Health Department.
  - In order for an **Apprentice** to become a **Practitioner**, a minimum of 2000 hours must be completed at the approved Establishment.

**Note: All Body Art Licenses that are new are required to go before the Board of Health for approval**

## Minimum Housing

[105 CMR 410.00: Minimum Standard for Housing](#) [Excess Moisture Control and Mold -Fact Sheet](#)

[The Attorney General's Guide to Landlord and Tenant Rights](#) [MA Integrated Pest Management Toolkit](#)

- **Rooming House License**
  - If new owner, **MUST** apply with Licensing Board, Inspectional Services and Fire Prevention.
  - Layout of dwelling.
- **Pre-Rental Voucher Inspection**
  - This program is intended for homeowners who rent out dwelling units to occupants and want a third party to verify the unit meets minimum housing regulations.
  - Information of prospective occupant.
  - If unit will have a child(ren) under the age of 6, provide delead/ lead safe report.
  - Will have prospective occupant and owner or designated representative present during inspection.
- **Voucher (Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher)**
  - This is an inspection prompted by a company (HCVP, MRVP, or other company) that is providing financial assistance to occupants and requires that unit meet minimum housing requirements under 105 CMR 410.
  - Information of prospective occupant.
  - If unit will have a child(ren) under the age of 6, provide delead/ lead safe report.
  - Will have prospective occupant and owner or designated representative present during inspection.

- Letter will be provided upon passing of inspection (no violations found during inspection) and can be picked up at the NBHD office. Signature of owner or representative is required.
- **Department of Early Education and Care Inspection**
  - This inspection is for facilities requesting LBOH for an inspection.
  - The inspection report will be provided at the time of inspection.

#### **Public/ Semi-Public Pool, wading, and special purpose**

- If new, proposed design in conformance with 105 CMR 435 State Sanitary Code [105 CMR 435.00: State sanitary code chapter V: Sanitary standards for swimming pools | Mass.gov](#) and Virginia Graeme Baker Act [Federal Register :: Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act; Incorporation by Reference of Successor Standard](#)
- Most recent pool testing logs (last three months)
- Lifeguard Waiver Variance
  - Non-transferable when change of ownership or new pool.
  - Must submit a request for no lifeguards to the New Bedford Board of Health.
- Lifeguard credentials [Red Cross Lifeguard Certification](#) or [Lifeguard Training | YMCA](#)
- Certified Pool Operator Certification, CPO must be onsite weekly to review test logs.
  - Instructors list can be obtained at the Health Department.
- CPR/First Aid Certifications
  - Instructors list can be obtained at the Health Department.

#### **Recreational Camp**

- Must follow all regulations under 105 CMR 430 [Recreational camps | Mass.gov](#)
- Must set up meeting with Nursing and Environmental Health Division prior to camp day opening.

#### **Title 5 (Septic Systems)**

- **Disposal Work Installer** [Massachusetts law about Title 5 | Mass.gov](#)
  - Hoister License
  - If new, copy 3 different permits issued by Health Department/Board's of Health
  - Certificate of General Liability
- **Septage Hauler Permit** [Title 5 septic system forms | Mass.gov](#)
  - List of properties/address business provides service to in New Bedford
  - Certificate of General Liability Insurance
  - Serviced properties must be submitted monthly using [New Bedford Septic pumping record](#)
- **Septic Construction, Repair, Abandonment** - Applications are only available at the Health Department office. This application must be submitted by a **Disposal Work Installer** licensed by the City of New Bedford.
- **Percolation Test** - Applications are available at the Health Department office and must be requested by an active licensed Soil Evaluator/Civil Engineer in MA. [Percolation-Application](#)

#### **Garbage/Offal Hauler**

[New Bedford Code of Ordinance - Garbage Hauler MA General Law - Part I, Title XVI, Chapter 111, Section 31A](#)

- [MassDEP Solid Waste Policies, Guidance & Fact Sheets | Mass.gov](#)
- List of properties/address business provides service to in New Bedford.
- Liability Insurance

### Tanning

- If new, must conform to MA regulations 105 CMR 123.000 [Tanning facilities | Mass.gov](#)
- Written warning provided to clients about safety/risks of tanning
- Client application
- Certificates of trained personnel
- Layout of the facility to include egresses, restrooms, janitor/mop sink, equipment placement with dimensions,
- Equipment schedule (make and model) with specification sheet.
- Business certificate – this is obtained from City Clerk’s office at City Hall

### Trailer/Manufactured housing License

[Camp Trailer Regulations Manufactured Housing Act-MGL-C.140-S-32A-32B-32C-32D-32E-1](#)

- If new, layout of land with number of homes with connection of water/sewer
- Must conform to all Local/ State Building, Plumbing/ Electrical and Fire Code
- [Manufactured Housing | Mass.gov](#)

### Tobacco

[Local/State/Federal Laws related to Tobacco - Mass.gov](#)

- Photo ID of the Owner/Operator responsible for the business
- All applicable Massachusetts DOR licenses (Cigarettes, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Cigars & Smoking Tobacco)
- Signed copies of the employee agreement form from each employee selling tobacco
- [New Bedford BOH - Synthetic drug ban regulation](#)

**Note: If you are a new operator who purchased a store that was previously permitted for Tobacco, you must apply for a Tobacco permit within 60 days of the sale/lease being finalized. In addition to the above-listed documents, you must also attach a dated copy of the purchase & sale agreement or lease agreement.**

### What other Reviewers might be required for my project?

**Conservation review** – buildings within conservation areas (within 100 feet of wetlands) will require review from the Conservation Commission, which meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month (applications must be submitted 12 days in advance).

**Department of Inspectional Services** – any project that constructs, reconstructs, alters, repairs, removes or demolishes a structure, as well as changing the use or occupancy of a structure (from one type of food establishment to another). Any Electrical or Plumbing work done to any building permitting by the

New Bedford Health Department, as well as any residential unit requires application be submitted through Open Gov.

**Department of Public Infrastructure** – Projects with residential curb cuts or driveways, as well as water, wastewater, storm drain, or stormwater permits are approved by the Department of Public Infrastructure. Projects with commercial curb cuts are approved by the Traffic Commission. Public events occurring in the City

**Fire Prevention review**- Projects in food service using commercial food service equipment that uses gas ignition/frying oil, this includes temporary events, mobile trucks, and food establishment. Projects for Rooming house license.

**Licensing Board** – Any project for bars, hotels/motels, rooming houses, food service establishments, entertainment or buying or selling alcoholic beverages require approval from the Licensing Board. The board meets on the fourth Monday of the month (applications required 21 days in advanced).

**Planning review** – for new developments and any projects involving site plans the Planning Board will need to review plans- see the planning board website for details on meetings and deadlines.

**Zoning review** – projects with zoning relief, variances, special permits, signs, comprehensive permits, and administrative appeals require review from the Zoning Board. See the zoning board website for meeting times and deadlines.

#### **What if I've already started a project without a permit?**

If you've begun a project without receiving a permit, stop immediately and submit a permit to NBHD and DIS (Department of Inspectional Services) via Open Gov and other respective departments.

Starting work without a permit may incur the owner and/or operator fines for each day from the start of the project. Further, you may be ordered to remove some or all completed work if it's found to violate state or city/state laws/codes. This is applicable to projects with permits currently pending.

#### **Can I speak with an inspector before I start a new project?**

Yes- we strongly encourage potential applicants to meet with the Health Department before applying for any permit, and as early in the process as possible, to prevent unnecessary or unexpected delays from incomplete applications.

#### **What factors are considered when my permit application is reviewed?**

The Health Department will review the applications to ensure compliance with all submitted plans with both local and state laws.

#### **How long does the permit review process take?**

For most small-scale alterations without any missing forms, you can expect approval within 30 days. Some projects are approved within ten days or less.

**What are the fees associated with permits issued by the Health Department?**

Depending on the type of permit, see our fee schedule for up-to-date prices located on this link,

[Fee Schedule](#).

**What other services does the New Bedford Health Department provide not available through the Open Gov system?**

Learn more about what the Health Department does on our website. [Health Department - City of New Bedford Official Website](#)