

## CONTACTS

**COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER, 2 WOODWARD AVENUE**  
**Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department**  
**BSEED Development Resource Center**  
Room 434 | (313) 224-2372 | drc@detroitmi.gov | detroitmi.gov/drc  
**BSEED Zoning**  
Room 407 | (313) 224-1317 | zoning@detroitmi.gov  
**City Clerk**  
Room 200 | (313) 224-3260  
**Office of the Assessor**  
Room 804 | (313) 224-3011 | <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/office-chief-financial-officer/ocfo-divisions/office-assessor>  
**DFD Plan Examination**  
Room 411 | (313) 224-1311  
**DPW City Engineering, Survey Bureau**  
Room 642 | (313) 224-3970

**DWSD Stormwater Management Group**  
6425 Huber St, Detroit, MI 48211  
(313) 267-8000 | swgroup@detroitmi.gov

**DWSD, 735 Randolph Street**  
**Field Engineering**  
Room 104 | (313) 267-8309  
**Permits Customer Service**  
(313) 964-9293

**DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health**  
3245 E. Jefferson  
Room 100 | (313) 876-0135

## KEY TERMS

**By Right vs. Conditional Use:** Not all uses are allowed in all buildings/neighborhoods. Some uses are permitted “by right” in your zoning designation, and some uses (conditional) require special exemptions.

**Encroachment:** An encroachment is any privately owned and maintained improvement located within the public right-of-way.

**Easement:** Easements are a right given to another person or entity to trespass upon or use land owned by somebody else.

**E-plans:** The city’s online Building Plan submission portal. Allows plans to be submitted and reviewed online.

**Established use:** The legally permitted purpose of a property, as permitted by the City of Detroit.

**MEP:** Mechanical, Engineering and Plumbing.

**Plan Review:** The process of submitting building plans for approval (conditional land use, building permits etc.)

**Stormwater Management Plan:** The city requires new and re-development to implement stormwater management practices.

**Vacation:** A street vacation, also known as an alley vacation or vacation of public access, is a type of easement in which a government transfers the right-of-way of a public street, highway or alley to a private property owner.

**Variance:** A variance is a request to deviate from current zoning requirements. If granted, it permits the owner to use the land in a manner not otherwise permitted by the zoning ordinance.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

5 phases to opening your business  
in the City of Detroit



# I HAVE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS FOR MY SPACE

If you are establishing a new business in a new space, in many cases you need to submit construction documents signed by a licensed architect or engineer. This is especially required if you are changing the use or type of business in a space. For example, if you are establishing a carry-out food establishment in what used to be a sit-down restaurant. Your plans must be approved by the Building, Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Department (BSEED), the Detroit Health Department, and the Fire Department before you can begin construction. The City wants to protect you from unlicensed contractors who might cause you to fail your final inspections, so it is important that you make sure your contractor is able to get all the necessary permits before work is started. The steps required and recommended to make it through this process are outlined by City department in the following chart.

## DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Contact your District Business Liaison (DBL)

**District 1:** Tenecia Johnson  
(313) 460-0775  
tjohnson@degc.org

**District 2:** Ammie Woodruff  
(313) 510-8261  
awoodruff@degc.org

**District 3:** Md-Abdul Muhit  
(313) 452-7704  
mmuhit@degc.org

**District 4:** Martell Bivings  
(313) 510-5288  
mbivings@degc.org

**District 5:** Lynn Wiggins  
(313) 452-1926  
lwiggins@degc.org

**District 6:** Luz Meza  
(313) 510-2488  
lmeza@degc.org

**District 7:** Brianna Walker  
(313) 515-6979  
bwalker@degc.org

## WAS THIS GUIDE HELPFUL?

We appreciate your feedback:  
[bit.ly/detroitopen4biz](https://bit.ly/detroitopen4biz)



### Icon Key

In-Person	Call	Mail	Online	Email	Required	Recommend	Form	Fee

	What							How	Who & Where	Form/Fee	
	✓							Submit plans to BSEED for Plan Review.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
			✓					Submit plans to Health Department for Plan Review for approval.		DHD Food Safety and Environmental Health	
						✓		Submit plans to Fire Department for approval.		DFD Plan Examination	
		✓						Submit copy of construction drawings.		Office of the Assessor	
	✓							If needed, request building permit for change of use.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓							Request building permits.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓							Make sure your contractors get trade permits (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing).		BSEED Development Resource Center	
	✓							Ensure that sign contractor pulls the necessary permits from the City of Detroit.		BSEED Development Resource Center	
			✓					If your project will permanently use public alleys or sidewalks, request a permanent encroachment.		DPW City Engineering, Survey Bureau	
				✓				If creating/replacing at least 1/2 acre of impervious surface (e.g., a parking lot), pay plan review fee to DWSD in order to comply with stormwater management ordinance.		DWSD Stormwater Management Group	
				✓				If modifying water or sewer lines outside of building, or if fire separation lines are needed (per Fire Marshal), submit plans and get a permit.		DWSD Field Engineering, DWSD Permits Customer Service	
				✓				If planning a petition for an encroachment or easement in the public right-of-way, or outright vacation (taking over an alley completely), review plans and get advice in advance.		DWSD Field Engineering	
	✓							If plans are denied, you can appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals.		BSEED Zoning	
						✓		If planning to have a temporary seasonal patio or cafe, submit request for temporary cafe permit.		City Clerk's Office	

### Other recommended Steps

If the project requires a variance or hearing, learn what and how the community feels about the project