



## Opening Your Business—Feasibility Study Process

### You will need a feasibility study if you plan to open:

1. In a space that was previously used by a different type of business or
2. Where you will need a building code permit for repairs, alterations, or upgrades or
3. Where the use type is one of the following:
  - Restaurant, food service or commercial kitchen
  - Beauty salon, barber shop, or spa
  - Vehicle repair facility or any business with a paint booth
  - Day care or child care facility
  - Hotel/motel
  - Assembly use such as a church, private club, etc.
  - A use that has a hazardous classification
  - A use that is similar to any of the above

### What is a feasibility study?

A feasibility study is a free service where we visit your planned location with you so that we can assess the location's ability to meet required building, zoning, fire, and other local regulations.

### Why is it an essential step in opening a business?

So that you can gain a basic understanding of:

1. Whether you would need to go through any public hearing processes to request the use in the location, because those can take a couple of months to go through; and
2. The likely and potential costs involved in getting your business into the location.

## Steps involved

- 1 Submit your request to Schedule a Feasibility online at [www.cityofrockhill.com/newlicense](http://www.cityofrockhill.com/newlicense)
- 2 Before we meet, provide:
  - ◆ A scaled floor plan showing the layout of the proposed business with all rooms labeled according to their use.
  - ◆ A sketch plan of the property.
  - ◆ A [Management of Impacts Plan](#), if you are a bar/nightclub, teen club, event venue, a restaurant that serves alcohol and is open after midnight, or a craft brewery only.
- 3 Come to the appointment on time so you can tell us more about the use type and we can start talking through any issues we with you. The next few pages show the types of things that our team will be looking for. Please note this list is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of every code requirement or upgrade that may be required for your project. Customers should always perform their own due diligence on a property.
- 4 After we meet, we will email you a report that lists any required repairs or upgrades to the building or property, or any zoning information or other subjects that you need to know. This is the feasibility study.
- 5 In many cases, you will need to work with a South Carolina-licensed contractor, architect, and/or an engineer to submit plans and apply for building permits for required repairs or upgrades. Inspections will be done as necessary throughout the construction process, and a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued once the project is complete.
  - [Commercial Building Permits](#)
- 6 Once your contractor has obtained any required permits, you can submit a Business License Application and Commercial Utilities Application through our [Business License Application portal](#). We will process these applications for you—there is no need for you to contact other City departments for help.
  - The fee for business licensing is based off the business's gross income.
  - Utility deposits are determined by industry comps and history of usage at the location.
- 7 At this point, you may also want to request natural gas from [York County Natural Gas](#) and phone/cable/internet from [Comporium Communications](#).
- 8 When your inspections are approved, the process is complete, and you are ready to **open for business!** We will mail your business license to you.

# Pre-opening inspection checklist

## Zoning

### Land Use

- Is the land use allowed in the location? (Usually, we will know this before the feasibility study is scheduled.)
- If the land use has any use-specific standards that must be met, can they be met? We will evaluate these for you and explain any issues that we see.
- If any special review processes are needed (rezoning requests, special exception requests, variance requests, etc.), we will explain that process to you.

### Site improvements

- Site improvements are frequently required, depending on whether the same use existed in the space before, whether you are substantially renovating the building, etc.

Examples of commonly required improvements:

- Adding parking spaces
- Paving gravel parking lots
- Adding landscaping
- Modifying signs in terms of height or size

### Maintenance

- All aspects of the site (parking lot, signs, landscaping, fences, dumpster enclosures, etc.) must be maintained in good repair.

### Permits

- We will remind you about permits that you may need to obtain, such as for signs (even face replacements) and fences.

## Building Code

### Access for People with Disabilities

- The required number of handicap parking spaces must be provided.
- There must be a handicap accessible route to the building entrance.
- Door must swing out in most cases.
- Doorways must be 32 inches wide.
- The required number of restroom facilities for ADA compliance must be provided. (This is determined by occupant load, which we will calculate using the floor plan you provided, and information obtained during our site visit.)

### Basic Code standards

- Heating and cooling equipment must be operational.
- Building must be insulated to comply with 2009 Energy Code requirements:
  - R-30 in the ceilings
  - R-13 in the walls
  - R-19 in the floors when first floor entails a crawl space
- Depending on the occupancy use and occupancy load, the space may be required to have drinking fountain(s).
- Depending on the occupancy use and occupancy load, the space may be required to have a dedicated service sink.
- Hair salons require back flow preventers to prevent chemicals being used to enter the potable water system and special ventilation.

## Fire Code



### Address posting

- Address must be clearly posted on building (and street if more than 50 feet away)
- Rear doors to multi-tenant spaces must have business name

### Fire extinguishers— Correct type and number, and location

- For most uses, a five-pound ABC fire extinguisher is required for every 1,500 square feet
- Must have a current test date label. (Fire extinguishers must be tested annually by a licensed dealer.)
- Must be in plain view with a maximum travel distance to the extinguisher of 75 feet.

**Specific items** that we will inspect to ensure that they function properly, are accessible, etc.:

#### Exits and Fire Escapes

#### Sprinklers and Fire Alarm Systems

#### Electrical Equipment

#### Construction Features

- Ceiling tiles must be in place.
- There cannot be any holes in the walls or ceilings separating your business from another tenant.
- Stairwell handrails must be secure.

### Hazardous Materials

- Any hazardous chemicals that are stored cannot exceed the maximum allowed.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be available on site for any flammable, combustible or hazardous material. **Fire lanes**

- Fire lanes must be properly marked and unobstructed.

**Housekeeping** inside and outside must be orderly.

- We will make sure that items are not stored along exit paths, under stairs, near heating sources, etc.

### Restaurants/Kitchens and Assembly

- Occupancy load must be posted.
- "K" type fire extinguisher must be mounted in visible location in kitchen area.
- Hood system must be clean and free of accumulated grease.
- Kitchen hood must have been inspected within the last 6 months.

## Pre-treatment of Wastewater

The City has a [Fats, Oil and Grease \(FOG\) program](#) that regulates food service establishments and other industrial or commercial establishments that generate wastewater containing fats, oils or grease.

The ordinance requires:

- Grease interceptors (also known as "grease traps") and other devices to be installed; and
- A grease discharge permit, which must be obtained and then renewed annually.