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City Clerk



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Updated on September 4, 2013)

Birth, Death & Marriage Certificates:

- **How can I obtain a certified copy of a Birth, Death or Marriage Certificate?**

You may visit the Registry Division located on the second floor at Boston City Hall or you may go online to www.cityofboston.gov/registry for further instructions requesting items through the mail.

There are restrictions for request of birth records, so please call the Registry Division before requesting or going to City Hall. You may call 617-635-4175 for additional information.

Business Certificates:

- **How long is a Business Certificate valid?**

A business certificate is valid for four (4) years from the date of filing.

- **What law governs the filing of Business Certificates?**

A business certificate is governed under and maintained according to Massachusetts General Law

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter110/Section5>

- **Why do I need a valid issued government picture Identification?**

A valid government issued picture Identification is required as proof of identification.

- **Why am I not able to use a P.O. Box as my business or residential address?**

According to the Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 110, a physical address which contains a street name and number must be used as the business address

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter110/Section5>.

- **Why do I have to pay a fee to change my Business Certificate?**

According the State Statute

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter110/Section5>

there is no amendment to a business certificate. When business certificate information is changed once filed, it must be resubmitted with the new information and a fee is associated with those changes according to the City Ordinance, Chapter 18-1.2

[http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxviiiifeesandcharges/18-1-1enumerationoffeesandcharges?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:boston_ma\\$anc=JD_18-1.2](http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxviiiifeesandcharges/18-1-1enumerationoffeesandcharges?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:boston_ma$anc=JD_18-1.2).

Going Out of Business Sales:

- **How do I file a “Going Out of Business Sale”?**

Any entity that is holding a “Going Out of Business Sale” or conducting a “Liquidation Sale” in the City of Boston must file an application for closing out sale with the Office of the City Clerk within three (3) business days prior to the initial sale date.

The application must include an inventory of all present stock that is being liquidated, a bond in the amount of 1,000.00 (One-Thousand dollars) and the filing fee of \$100.00.

Hawkers/Peddlers/Vendors Permits:

- **How can I get a Hawker/Peddler/Vendor Permit?**

Hawker/Peddler/Vendor Permit applications can be obtained by going to Massachusetts Division of Standard www.mass.gov/standards. These documents may be obtained in person at the John W. McCormick Building, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1115, Boston, MA or by going online to <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/government/oca-agencies/dos-lp/dos-licensing/hawker-and-peddler-license/>.

Import/Export Licenses:

- **Where do I get an Import/Export License?**

An Import/Export license application can be obtained by calling the Massachusetts Import/Export Center at (617) 973-8664 or by going online to www.mass.gov/export to download the application.

City of Boston Claims:

- **When may I file a claim against the City?**

- 1) Personal injuries due to incidents on public walkways or property damage due to road defects, etc., (**Chapter 84, Section 15**) with a 30-Day statute of limitations.
- 2) Personal Injuries or property damage due to the negligence of the City and its employees. (**Chapter 258**) with a two (2) year statute of limitations.

- **What is the procedure for filing a claim?**

You are requested to provide as much information as possible to document your claim, including pictures. Claims are filed in the Office of the City Clerk then are referred to the City's Law Department. If you have any questions regarding the status of a claim after it's been filed you should direct them to the City's Law Department at (617) 635-4034.

- **Why do I have to pay a fee to file a claim?**

City Ordinance Chapter 18-1.3 requires a filing fee of \$15.00; however, your fee becomes part of your settlement if decision is rendered in your favor.

- **Can I fax my claim?**

No! Original documents and original signatures are required when filing a claim with the City Clerk's Office. Claims can be filed in person or by mail.

- **What is a Statute of Limitations?**

A Statute of Limitations is the legal timeframe during which you must file a claim against the City. Road defects, slips and falls etc., (**Chapter 84, Section 15**) with a 30-Day Statute of Limitations and personal injuries or property damage (**Chapter 258**) with a two (2) year Statute of Limitations.

- **Why do I have to file a claim for the refund of towing charges?**

If a private towing company towed your vehicle, those funds were paid directly to that company to release your vehicle. The only way the City can reimburse those funds is for you to file a claim against the City for wrongful towing.

Constable Appointments:

- **How can I be appointed as a Constable in the City of Boston?**

You must **apply in person** at the Boston Police Headquarters' Licensing Division, 1 Schroeder Place, Roxbury, MA from January 2nd - February 15th of each calendar year.

All Constables are appointed by the Mayor and then Constables are processed through City Clerk's Office via City Council for approval and swearing-in; governed by Massachusetts General Laws;

<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter41> and City of Boston Ordinance, Chapter 2-7.2;

[http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapteriiiformofgovernment?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:boston_ma\\$anc=JD_2-7.2](http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapteriiiformofgovernment?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:boston_ma$anc=JD_2-7.2).

Copies of Filed Documents:

- **How can I get a certified copy of legislation passed by the City Council?**

A certified copy of filed or adopted documents in the City Clerk's Office can be obtained by coming to the office at Boston City Hall, Room 601, Boston, MA. However, certain documents filed or adopted prior to January 1, 2002 are filed in the City's Archives Division. You can speak with a staff member by calling (617) 635-1195 and there are fees associated with these requests.

Corporation/LLC/Ltd/Incorporation/Non-Profits/Trust Filings:

- **How can I file as a Corporation, LLC, LTD, Incorporation, Non-Profit, P.C., Etc.?**

To create any type of corporation in Massachusetts, you MUST file the required paperwork at the Secretary of the State's Office-Division of Corporations located at the John W. McCormick Building, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1719, Boston, MA or by calling (617)727-9640 or by going online to www.mass.gov/corporation.

Division of Inspectional Services Permits, Violations, Etc.:

- **What are the different types of permits, violations, etc. processed through the Inspectional Services Division; and how can I obtain them?**

Occupancy Permits – (617) 961-3223

Food/Health Permits – (617) 635-5326

Housings, Violations, Complaints – (617) 635-5322

Code Enforcement – (617) 635-4896

Building & Construction Permits – (617) 961-3271

Public Health Commission – (617) 534-2363

Park & Recreation Permits – (617) 635-4505

(All of the above departmental sections are located at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, MA. 02118)

Domestic Partnerships:

- **How do I file a Domestic Partnership?**

A Domestic Partnership Form can be obtained by going online to www.cityofboston.gov/cityclerk to download the form. Both parties are required to complete and sign the form. Either party can submit the form in person or mail it to the City Clerk's Office at Boston City Hall, Room 601, Boston, MA. 02111. The filing fee is \$62.00.

Domestic Partnerships are governed by City Ordinance Chapter 12, Section 9A; [http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxiipublichealthandwelfare?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:boston_ma\\$anc=JD_12-9A](http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxiipublichealthandwelfare?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:boston_ma$anc=JD_12-9A).

Events Held In Public Parks:

- **How can I get a permit to hold an event in a public park?**

You must apply for a permit with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. You can call (617) 635-4505 or go online www.cityofboston.gov/parks; and download the **Special Event Application**.

Federal Tax Identification/State Sale Tax Numbers:

- **How can I get a Federal Tax ID or a State Sales Tax Number?**

You may apply for a Federal Tax ID number by calling 1-800-829-1040 or by going online to www.irs.ustreas.gov. You may obtain a State Tax ID Number by calling 1-800-392-6089 or go online to www.ma.gov/dor.

Filing Complaints about City Services:

- **Where do I go to file a complaint about city services?**

You may contact the Mayor's 24-Hour Hotline for constituent services at (617) 635-4500 or online to <http://www.cityofboston/mayor/24>.

Fingerprinting Services:

- **Where can I go for fingerprinting services?**

You can obtain fingerprinting services at the:

Boston Police Headquarters
1 Schroeder Plaza, Licensing Division
Boston, MA 02120

Main Phone: 617-343-4200
Licensing Division Phone: 617-343-6044

Livery & Limousine Permits or Jitney Licenses:

- **Where can I obtain a Livery/Limousine permit or Jitney License?**

To operate as a Livery or Limousine service within the City of Boston, you must file a Business Certificate with the City Clerk's Office. You **must** be a resident of the City of Boston, providing proof of residency, such as a current utility bill, your driver's license and both addresses must match.

Once registered, you can apply for a Livery or Limousine Plate with the Registry of Motor Vehicle at (617) 531-4500 or by going online to www.massdot.state.ma.us/rmv. However, if you wish to drop off or pick-up passengers at specific locations such as Logan Airport, Convention Centers and/or Hotels within the City of Boston, you **must** apply for a Jitney License and applications must be completed and filed in person at the Office of the City Clerk.

Moving Truck or Dumpster Permits:

- **How can I get a permit for a Moving Truck or Dumpster?**

You can obtain a permit **in person** at the Boston Transportation Department at Boston City Hall, Room 724 to apply for a "No Parking" sign. Then you take the "No Parking" request to the Public Works Department, Boston City Hall, Room 714, to receive the actual permit to post.

However, if you are applying for a dumpster permit you must obtain a letter from the disposal company, stating the dimension of the container being used.

Notary or Apostille Certification(s):

- **How can I get a document(s) Notarized and/or apply for an Apostille Certification?**

You can obtain the services of a Notary Public at the City Clerk's Office at Boston City Hall, Room 601, Boston, MA, **in person** with valid issued government identification. A fee of \$5.00 is required for each notarized document.

An Apostille is issued by the Massachusetts Secretary of State who verifies the authenticity of the Notary's signature. An Apostille can be obtained at the MA Secretary of the State's Office at the John W. McCormick Building., 1 Ashburton Place, Room 1719, Boston, MA. The fee is \$6.00 per document. You may contact 617-727-2836 for more information.

Payment of Marijuana Violations:

- **Where do I go to make a payment for a Marijuana Violation?**

Payments for Marijuana Violations issued by Boston Police, MBTA Police, State Police or any other law enforcement agency within the City of Boston must be paid at the City Clerk's Office at Boston City Hall, 1 City Hall Square, Room 601., Boston, MA. 02201.

You must submit a copy of the citation and citation number with your payment.

Physician Registration:

- **Why do I have to register my medical license?**
You are required by the Massachusetts's General Law
<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter112/Section2>
- **Who is exempt from filing?**
A Resident in training with a **Limited** license,
An Intern with a **Limited** license,
A Physician conducting research (exclusively),
A Physician teaching (exclusively),
A Physician practicing at a Government Facility (Veteran Administration/Military)
- **Why do I have to pay a filing fee?**
The filing fee of \$100.00 is governed by City Ordinance, Chap. 18-1.16 (22)
[http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxviiiifeesandcharges/18-1-enumerationoffeesandcharges?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:boston_ma\\$anc=JD_18-1.](http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Massachusetts/boston/chapterxviiiifeesandcharges/18-1-enumerationoffeesandcharges?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:boston_ma$anc=JD_18-1)

Public Meeting/Hearing Notices:

- **Where can I view scheduled public hearing and meetings?**
All public meetings and hearings can be viewed by visiting the city's website at www.cityofboston.gov/calendar to review the City Calendar. You may also view the original notice of a meeting or hearing at the city's bulletin board located at Boston City Hall on the 1st Floor at the Congress Street Entrance.

Raffle/Bazaar/Las Vegas Nights:

- **Who can apply for a Raffle/Bazaar/Las Vegas Night Permit in the City of Boston?**
"Non-Profit" organizations that are registered with the Massachusetts Secretary of the State's Office, Division of Corporations for at least two (2) years can apply for this permit. [https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter271/Section7A, s. 7A.](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter271/Section7A,s.7A)
You must submit the permit thirty (30) days prior to the event. There must be three (3) members of the organization listed on the application; who shall be responsible for the operation of the event(s) held under the permit.

Special Events in Boston:

- **How do I find out what special event(s) are being held in Boston?**
You may contact the Office of Arts, Tourism and Special Events at (617) 635-3911 for additional information. You may also go online to www.cityofboston.gov/arts or www.cityofboston.gov/calendar to view all upcoming events.

Type of Filings or Services provided by the City Clerk's Office:

- **What type of filings and services are provided by the City Clerk's Office?**
Below is a list of filings and services performed in the City Clerk's Office.
 - ❖ Assignment of Creditors - \$15.00

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ❖ Assignment of Wages - \$15.00
- ❖ Billing for Poles and Conduits - \$100.00
- ❖ Business Certificate - \$65.00
- ❖ Child Support Liens - \$15.00
- ❖ City Charter (book) - \$7.00
- ❖ City Contracts Filings
- ❖ City Council Filings
- ❖ City Ordinance Filings
- ❖ Claims - \$15.00
- ❖ Corporations (merging)
- ❖ Domestic Partnership - \$62.00
- ❖ Jitney License - \$500.00 Filing Fee; \$200.00 Renewal Fee; \$100.00 Amendment Fee
- ❖ Lien of Vessel - \$25.00
- ❖ Mayoral Receipt – No Fee
- ❖ Marijuana Violations - \$100.00
- ❖ Military Discharge – No Fee
- ❖ Notary Public - \$5.00 for each notarization
- ❖ Oaths (city's elected or appointed officials)
- ❖ Petition for Poles – \$100.00
- ❖ Physician's Registration - \$100.00
- ❖ Public Notice/Meeting Postings
- ❖ Raffles/Bazaar/Las Vegas Night Permits - \$30.00
- ❖ Trusts & Amendments - \$100.00
- ❖ Tax Liens – \$25.00
- ❖ University Accountability Filings – No Fee

Underground Storage Tanks (21E):

- **Where are underground storage tanks records filed?**

The records for underground storage tanks, which are known as "21E Search", are filed with the Boston Fire Department. You can call and speak with a Ms. Frances Marte at (617) 343-3336 or Ms. Lori Donovan at (617)343-3772.

However, the Boston Fire Prevention Code is filed in the City Clerk's Office.

Permit(s) and/or License(s) Issued at the State Level:

- **What are some of the type of permit(s) and/or license(s) issued by the State?**

You can obtain various permit(s) and/or license(s) from the State Boards of Registration. Below are some of the permit(s) and license(s) issued:

- ❖ Barbers – (617) 727-7367
- ❖ Collection Agencies – (617) 956-1500 (check cashiers, lenders, brokers, finance agencies)
- ❖ Cosmetologists- (617) 727-9940 (Aestheticians', Beauticians', Hairdresser, Manicurist's)
- ❖ Elderly Care – (617) 727-9368
- ❖ Electricians - (617) 727-9931 (Master/Journeyman, Fire warning, contractors)
- ❖ Fishing/Hunting/Trapping – (617) 626-1590
- ❖ Home Improvement/Construction License – (617) 727-3200
- ❖ Home Inspectors License – (617) 727-4459

- ❖ Landscaping – (617) 727-3072
- ❖ Message Therapists – (617) 727-3074
- ❖ Painters/Riggers – (617) 727-3200
- ❖ Plumbers & Gasfitters – (617) 727-9952
- ❖ Real Estate Brokers/Salespeople – (617) 727-2373

Permit(s) and/or License(s) Issued at the City/Town Level:

- **What are some of the type of permit(s) and/or license(s) issued by the City?**

You can obtain various permit(s) and/or license(s) from the City of Boston. Below are some of the permit(s) and license(s) issued:
- ❖ Alcoholic Beverages - (617) 635-4170 (retail, café, restaurant, bar etc.)
- ❖ Building/Construction Permits – (617) 961-3271
- ❖ Catering/ Food Permits – (617) 635-5326
- ❖ Dancing School – (617) 635-4170 and/or (617) 961-3223
- ❖ Dog / Kennel License – (617) 635-4100 (Animal Control Department)
- ❖ Entertainment – (617) 635-4170 (Physic Readers, Pool Table, TV's & Pinballs, etc.)
- ❖ Hackney Licenses- (617) 343-4500 (Police Department)
- ❖ Inn Holder's Licenses – (617) 961-3223 (Inspectional Services Division)
- ❖ Lunch/Cart Trucks – (617) 635-5326 (Inspectional Services Division)
- ❖ Salons – (617) 961-3223 (nails, hair, spas, braiding, tanning, etc.)
- ❖ Used Car Dealers – (617) 343-4500 (Police Department)