



Citizen Access: Public Permit Portal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated July 30, 2020

Construction and development permitting services provided by the City of Fremont are now available online via Citizen Access, the City's public permit portal located at www.Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess.

The City understands the public may have questions about these new online services and how to use [Citizen Access](#). Please see a list of questions and answers on the following pages. This document will be updated regularly as updates are available.

Q1. What is Citizen Access, and how can I use it?

[Citizen Access](#), available at www.Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess, is the City's public permit portal. Users can create a [Citizen Access](#) account by selecting "Register for an Account." Once an account is created, users can log in to their account and perform the following actions.

- Search for permits by address, record number, and/or date range.
- Submit a new permit request for [planning permits](#), [building/fire permits](#), and [engineering permits](#).
- Track the status of a permit.
- Resubmit plans and documents for a project under review.
- Pay permit fees.
- Request revisions to issued permits.
- Schedule building inspections.

Q2. Who can I contact for help with Citizen Access?

For help or questions about [Citizen Access](#), please contact City staff via email at developmentservices@fremont.gov.

Q3. What are the benefits of submitting my permit request online?

Using [Citizen Access](#) to submit a permit request is quick and convenient. Users can submit their request from home any time of the day. Every step of the permit process can be completed online including payment of fees, resubmittal of plans and documents, and scheduling of building inspections. Applicants can also see all of their permit requests in one place (under “My Records”) and track the status of each.

Q4. Do I have to submit my permit request online?

No. Permit requests do not need to be submitted online. The [Development Services Center](#) is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. If someone chooses to visit the [Development Services Center](#), please note that the City is following Alameda County’s regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitors are required to wear a face covering, check their temperature at a Temperature Check Station, and complete a [COVID-19 screening form](#). Also, only a certain number of visitors can enter at one time, staffing is limited, and safety measures are in place to help maintain social distancing. As a result of all of these safety measures, wait times may be longer. Additionally, the City is quickly moving to an all-electronic plan/document review process. Because of this, if an applicant submits a permit request in the [Development Services Center](#), they will still need to provide electronic copies of all of the submittal items.

Q5. How do I request a new permit online?

For new permit requests, applicants should log in to their [Citizen Access](#) account and select "Pre-Application." Tips for successfully submitting a Pre-Application are located at the top of the webpage. The Pre-Application is a generic form that allows for the submittal of [planning permits](#), [building/fire permits](#), and [engineering permits](#). Because the Pre-Application is a generic form, applicants still need to complete the standard permit application ([planning permit application](#), [building/fire permit application](#), or [engineering permit application](#)) and upload it to the Pre-Application, along with the other required submittal plans and documents. To do this, applicants would do the following:

- Create an account at www.Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess.
- Log into their Citizen Access account.
- Select “Pre-Application.”
- Complete the form. Use the **Tips** at the top of the webpage to best search address, parcel, and owner information.

- Upload the permit application ([planning permit application](#), [building/fire permit application](#), or [engineering permit application](#)) and **any required plans/documents**.
- Continue the form to submittal.
- On-screen and email confirmations will be received if the submittal is successful.

Q6. What is a Pre-Application, and why do I need to submit one?

A Pre-Application is a generic online permit request form that allows applicants to submit a new request for a [planning permit](#), [building/fire permit](#), or [engineering permit](#). The Pre-Application was implemented quickly after the Alameda County Shelter in Place Order shut down City services in March 2020. It is intended to allow the City to receive, process, and issue permits remotely. If an applicant wants to submit a new permit request online, the only option at this time is the Pre-Application. As described in Question 4, the [Development Services Center](#) is open for service. If an applicant submits a permit request in person at the Center, a Pre-Application is not required.

The City is working to create specific online permit requests for each type of permit it issues. When this is done, it will eliminate the need to upload the permit application and will require specific documents to be uploaded before the request can be submitted. The City anticipates these specific online permit requests will roll out gradually in late 2020/early 2021, starting with simple permits that do not require plan review (e.g., water heaters). To receive updates as these changes roll out, please subscribe to the City's [Builders Interest Email List](#).

Q7. What happens after I submit my online permit request?

After a Pre-Application permit request is received, it will be converted to a standard permit. The applicant will see this standard permit record number in their [Citizen Access](#) account under "My Records." City staff will then follow up with the applicant with questions about the request, a list of missing submittal documents, if any, the plan review fee/deposit, and methods of payment. Once payment is received, the request will be processed for review.

Q8. I submitted my online permit request. When will I be contacted?

Staff aims to contact applicants within one week after the Pre-Application is converted to the standard permit record. Applicants are welcome to contact staff at any time to check the status of the review or with questions. When contacting staff about their

project, applicants should refer to the record number to facilitate a quicker response. To inquire about a permit request, applicants can contact staff as follows:

- [Planning Permits](mailto:planinfo@fremont.gov): 510-494-4455; planinfo@fremont.gov
- [Building/Fire Permits](mailto:permitprocessing@fremont.gov): 510-494-4460; permitprocessing@fremont.gov
- [Engineering Permits](mailto:engineering@fremont.gov): 510-494-4700; engineering@fremont.gov

Q9. Will online permits be processed in the same timeframe as those submitted in person at the Development Services Center?

Due to Alameda County's regulations regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the City's new safety protocols, the number of persons staff has been able to serve in the [Development Services Center](#) has been severely limited. Because of this, the City has had to work quickly to bring permitting services online to continue to receive, process, and issue permit requests. Due to the quick transition of bringing these services online, staff is still adapting to managing these online permit services. Because staff is not reviewing the applications before they are submitted, additional time is required after they are submitted to review them for completeness, communicate with applicants about missing submittal items, and receive plan review fees to be able to route permit requests for review. The City apologizes for these delays and is working to find more efficient ways to process online requests.

Q10. Can I pay for my permit online?

Yes. Permit fees can be paid by an applicant by either logging into their [Citizen Access](#) account or by completing a general record search without logging into a [Citizen Access](#) account. The City recommends that applicants log in to their [Citizen Access](#) account and select "My Records" to make a fee payment. Under "My Records," an applicant's list of active records will display by technical area (e.g., Building, Planning, Engineering, Pre-Application). If fees are due, at the far right of the record number under "Action," it will say "Pay Fees Due." Selecting "Pay Fees Due" takes the applicant to the payment screens. If fee payments are due on multiple records, an applicant can add the payments to their cart and then process all of the fee payments with one transaction. Please note that at this time, the maximum credit card transaction amount is \$5,000. Visa and MasterCard credit cards are accepted for payment. Payments of more than \$5,000 need to be made by check in the [Development Services Center](#).

To pay fees without logging into a [Citizen Access](#) account, applicants can select the module the permit was requested from (e.g., Building, Planning, Engineering), enter a

partial record number with the wildcard “%,” then select “Search.” For example, if the record number is BLD2021-12345, it can be searched as BLD2021-1234%. This will provide a list of records with these numbers. Once the applicant locates their record number in the list, they can select “Pay Fees Due” at the far right of the record number under “Action.” This will take the applicant to the payment screens. Applicants can submit payment for permit fees using a Visa or MasterCard credit card. The maximum payment transaction allowed is \$5,000. Payments of more than \$5,000 need to be made by check in the [Development Services Center](#).

Q11. How do I search my address in Citizen Access?

To get the best address search results, it is recommended that an abbreviated street name with the wildcard percent symbol “%” be used. For example, if the address to be searched is 39550 Liberty Street, it should be searched as 39550 Lib%, then select “Search.”

For Pre-Application requests, searching for the address in this manner will ensure a valid result with the City’s parcel database, as well as will auto populate the parcel number and owner information. If multiple addresses are available, the applicant should select the correct address for their project. Some address searches may be a little tricky if there is a direction in the street name (e.g., South Grimmer) or it is a new street name that may not yet be in the City’s parcel database. If an applicant gets stuck with one of these searches, they should still complete the Pre-Application form, upload the permit application and required plans/documents, and select “Save.” Staff can then access the record in the backend of the system to fix any address, parcel, and owner issues to enable the Pre-Application to be submitted.

If the parcel number or owner has recently changed, applicants should leave them as is so they can submit the online request. Applicants can then inform City staff that these items need to be corrected once the standard record number is created. Staff can make changes to parcel and owner information in the backend of the system.

Q12. How do I enter my parcel number in the Pre-Application form?

The best and easiest way to receive an accurate parcel number result is by receiving a valid address search result, as described in Question 10 above.

Parcel numbers should also be searched using a partial parcel number with the wildcard percent symbol “%.” The format should be entered as three digits, a space, four digits, and then the %. For example, if the parcel number is 123-45-6-7, it would be searched

as 123 0045%, selecting “Search” after entering the number. A list of parcel numbers with these same digits will be listed. The parcel number 123-45-6-7 will be listed as 123 004500607. The relevant parcel number can then be selected from the list.

Q13. Why do I still need to fill out the permit application and then upload it to the Pre-Application?

Because the Pre-Application is a generic submittal form, it does not provide enough information to process the variety of permits that the City issues. Because of this and until the City gets an online submittal form established for each permit it issues, the permit application must be completed and uploaded to the Pre-Application. Please see the permit applications below:

- [Planning Permit Application](#)
- [Building/Fire Permit Application](#)
- [Engineering Permit Application](#)

Q14. How do I find out who the Team Lead is of my project?

The Team Lead on any project can be found in [Citizen Access](#) by looking up the record number (either logged into a [Citizen Access](#) account or doing a general search) and reviewing the information under “Record Details.” The Team Lead is not assigned to a project until it is routed for plan review.

Q15. Who do I contact about the status of my permit?

If a project has been routed for review (which means an applicant has paid the plan review fees), the Team Lead should be contacted about the status of the permit review. The Team Lead on any project can be found in [Citizen Access](#) by looking up the record number (either logged into a [Citizen Access](#) account or doing a general search) and reviewing the information under “Record Details.”

If an applicant’s project has not yet been routed for review, the applicant should contact processing staff as listed below:

- [Planning Permits](#): 510-494-4455; planinfo@fremont.gov
- [Building/Fire Permits](#): 510-494-4460; permitprocessing@fremont.gov
- [Engineering Permits](#): 510-494-4700; engineering@fremont.gov

Q16. How do I resubmit plans/documents for an existing project under review?

If an applicant already has a project in process and needs to resubmit plans/documents, the resubmittal will need to be made via [Citizen Access](#). Existing records created in the [Development Services Center](#) will need to be linked to an applicant's [Citizen Access](#) account. Once the record is linked to the [Citizen Access](#) account, the applicant will be able to resubmit electronically.

To get an existing record linked to a [Citizen Access](#) account, an applicant should email their Team Lead to make this request, providing the email address on the account to be linked and the record number(s) to be linked to it. An applicant is also welcomed to send this request to developmentservices@fremont.gov. Once the record(s) is linked with the [Citizen Access](#) account, they will be found in the account under "My Records."

Once the record is linked with a [Citizen Access](#) account, the resubmittal process is as follows:

- Go to www.Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess.
- Log in to account.
- Select "Home."
- Select "My Records."
- Select the record that needs to be resubmitted.
- Select "Record Info."
- Select "Documents."
- Select "Add."
- Upload resubmittal documents.
- Select "Save."
- Email project Team Lead to inform them of resubmittal via [Citizen Access](#).

Q17. How do I submit a revision on an issued permit?

To submit a revision on an issued permit, the process is as follows:

- Go to www.Fremont.gov/CitizenAccess.
- Log in to account.
- Select “Home.”
- Select “My Records.”
- Select the issued record that a Revision needs to be reviewed.
- Select “Record Info.”
- Select “Documents.”
- Select “Add.”
- Upload Revision documents, including statement explaining why the revision to the issued permit is necessary and the plans documenting the proposed revision to the issued permit.
- Select “Save.”
- Email project Team Lead to inform them the Revision to the issued permit has been submitted via [Citizen Access](#).

Q18. Who do I contact if I do not understand the submittal requirements?

For questions about submittal requirements or the status of a record's review, please contact the project Team Lead (for existing projects), visit the webpages below, or use the contact information below to connect with staff.

- [Planning Permits](#): 510-494-4455; planinfo@fremont.gov
- [Building/Fire Permits](#): 510-494-4460; permitprocessing@fremont.gov
- [Engineering Permits](#): 510-494-4700; engineering@fremont.gov

Q19. What other City departments/divisions or outside agencies may be involved in my online permit request?

Coordination with other City departments/divisions and outside agencies may be necessary to obtain a City permit. View contact information below.

- [Environmental Services Division](#): Waste Handling Plan, Stormwater Permits
phone: 510-494-4570; email: environment@fremont.gov
- [Transportation Engineering Division](#): Traffic Control Plan
phone: 510-494-4745; email: transportationengineering@fremont.gov
- [Revenue Division](#): Business Tax
phone: 510-494-4790; email: revenue@fremont.gov
- [Alameda County Water District](#): Water Supply
phone: 510-668-4200
- [Republic Services](#): Garbage, Refuse Collection, and Disposal
phone: 510-657-3500
- [PG&E](#): Natural Gas and Electric Service
Residential Service Center: 1-877-660-6789
Business Service Center: 1-800-468-4743
- [Union Sanitary](#): Wastewater/Sewer Services
phone: 510-477-7500