

Lansdale  
Borough  
Department of  
Community  
Development

“Starting a  
Business  
In Lansdale  
Borough”

2012



# Department Information

The Department of Community Development is the first point of contact for new businesses, developers looking to provide commercial and residential opportunities or established businesses looking to invest and expand within the Borough. This Department works with the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Economic Development Committee and Code Committee to ensure all appropriate agencies are working to guide the applicant(s) through the process of establishing themselves in Lansdale Borough.

## **Lansdale Borough Department of Community Development**

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215.368.1691

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## **Montgomery County Health Department**

1430 DeKalb Street  
Norristown, Pa 19404  
610.278.5117  
www.health.montcopa.org

## **H.A. Berkheimer and Associates**

Tax Administrators  
63 West Fourth Street  
Bridgeport, Pa 19405  
610.279.7500  
800.360.7214  
www.hab-inc.com



# Process

## Understanding the Regulations

All businesses are required to follow regulations, which are government rules. These regulations may differ depending on the type of business that you intend to open. It is important that business owners understand and comply with regulations to protect their customers and their business investment.

## For All Businesses

Zoning regulations specify what types of businesses can operate in a particular location and set rules about signs and parking.

Building code regulations require that both the structure and the space within a business property are safe and accessible for customers and employees. Building codes specify how electrical, plumbing, heating and fire safety systems must be installed and maintained.

## For Businesses That Sell, Serve and / or Prepare Food

Food establishments are highly regulated in the United States to prevent sickness. Food establishment regulations specify how food storage, preparation areas and equipment should be set up and how systems like water supply and sanitation should be installed and maintained.

## As You Plan

Talk with the Borough Department of Community Development and / or Montgomery County Health Department (if your business will sell or handle food) before you invest money in your business or finalize your plans. If you are occupying a building or just a tenant space and plan to change any walls, doors, electrical fixtures, plumbing fixtures, ceilings or signage, we can help you understand zoning regulations and what you will need to do to bring the business property into compliance with regulations and obtain your licenses.

## Buying a Business

Buying an existing business or building within the Borough will require a Zoning Use and Occupancy permit. This should be applied for prior to the title change or occupancy of a building.

## **\*\*Important\*\* Confirm the Lansdale Borough Location**

Sometimes the mailing address of a property is not the same as the municipality where the business is physically located. Check with the Department of Community Development by calling 215.368.1691 to confirm that your new business is legally located within Borough boundaries. This is important because the municipality and county where the business is located sets the rules you will need to follow in order to set up your business legally.



## Obtaining Zoning Approval

Get a Use and Occupancy Registration form and file it with Lansdale Borough Department of Code Enforcement. On this form, you identify where your business will be located and what goods or services you will be selling. You also describe physical changes you are planning to make to the property. This information will be used for the zoning review for your business.

To obtain this form, call the department or visit [www.lansdale.org](http://www.lansdale.org) to download the application.



# Process



## Zoning

In the United States, the government regulates how private property may be used through a system known as zoning. Zoning

governs the use of property. For example, zoning indicates whether a property can be used as a restaurant, store, daycare, salon, home or other function. Zoning also regulates the size, spacing and other characteristics of lots and buildings as well as signs and parking.

Before you invest in or lease a property or business, check with the Borough Department of Community Development to find out if the zoning code allows the property to be used for the type of business you intend to operate—even if the same type of business is operating there now. If you do not get zoning approval early in the process, you may experience problems in the future with opening the specific type of business that you desire in your location. If you do not receive zoning approval, you may need to appear before the Zoning Hearing Board to seek a zoning variance.

## Obtaining Building Code Approval— All Businesses

To operate a business in Lansdale Borough, you will need to apply for a Use and Occupancy Permit and show that the property where your business will be located meets building code regulations. This permit is required for every new business even if you do not plan on making any physical changes to the property.



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For an application call the department or visit the Borough's website.

If you plan to sell or handle food, you must contact the Montgomery County Health Department at the same time you contact the Borough. *(please see page 2)*

## Building Permits and Inspections

If you are making physical changes to the business property, you will need to apply for building permits **before** you begin work. Based on your Use and Occupancy (U&O) application, the Department will identify the permits you need. Separate permits are required for work on plumbing, construction of walls or additions, electrical, heating or air conditioning systems. You may need to have plans and drawings prepared by an architect or engineer. You may also need to get a permit for adding or changing a sign or for trash dumpsters for your business. Code Enforcement staff will conduct inspections as work proceeds. Get permit applications from the Department of Code Enforcement by visiting the Department's section on [www.lansdale.org](http://www.lansdale.org).

## Fees

Every application permit, license and certification is likely to require a fee. Effective January 1, 2012 a non-refundable \$35 application review fee is required with all applications. If the permit is approved, this money will be applied to the permit fee. The fee depends on the type of permit required, the number of inspections needed and / or the cost of physical changes proposed. There are additional fees if you open a food establishment or seek a zoning variance.

## Final Approval

Before you open, Code Enforcement staff will inspect your new business to ensure compliance with all building codes. The Fire Department / Marshal will also inspect your fire protection systems. Even if you have not made physical changes, your new business must be inspected before you open.

# Business

## A Note About Building Plans

Be sure to check with the Lansdale Borough Department of Code Enforcement and the Montgomery County Health Department (if selling or handling food) to find out the type of building plans or drawings needed for changes you are making to your business space. While big changes will require drawings done by an architect or engineer, small changes may not require professionally prepared drawings.

## New Construction

If the proposed use of your business requires the construction of a new building, then the site design and planning standards set forth in the Borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance need to be followed. An applicant must submit a professionally engineered site plan and subdivision application to the Borough's Department of Code Enforcement for review and approval.

## Obtaining Health Code Approval—

### Only for Businesses Selling / Handling Food

Businesses that sell, serve and / or prepare food items are classified as "food establishments" and must be licensed and approved by the Montgomery County Health Department prior to opening in Lansdale. Contact the Health Department's Environmental Field Services office by calling 610.278.5117 to identify what you will need to do to comply with the health code and obtain your license. The Health Department requires that you have a plan review before doing any remodeling or construction.

## Registering Your Business—All Businesses

To do business in Lansdale, you must register your new business and get a license, which needs to be renewed each year. The Borough also requires payment of an annual Business Privilege Tax. H.A. Berkheimer and Associates handles business registration, licenses and tax payments for Lansdale. For an application to register your business in Lansdale, contact Berkheimer and Associates at **610.279.7500** or **800.360.7214**.

You must also register your new business entity and name with the State of Pennsylvania and obtain a sales tax license. To get application forms contact the PA Department of Revenue at **610.270.1780** or **717.787.1064** or go to the Pennsylvania Open for Business website **[www.paopen4business.state.pa.us](http://www.paopen4business.state.pa.us)**

If you plan to hire employees, you will need to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the United States Internal Revenue service (IRS). For an application contact the IRS at **800.829.4933** or apply online at **[www.irs.gov/businesses/small](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small)**.

As an employer you will also have tax obligations such as tax withholding and unemployment compensation. To learn more and get the necessary forms, contact the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue by calling **610.270.1780** or **717.787.1064** or go to **[www.paopen4business.state.pa.us](http://www.paopen4business.state.pa.us)**

## Borough Licensing

The Borough does not require an annual business license to operate within the Borough except for service contractors. All trade / service contractors must register with the Borough on an annual basis.

# Process

## Permit Information

Step One: Apply for the necessary permits including Use and Occupancy and Sign permits. An application and information sheet for the U & O inspection and requirements are available at Borough Hall and online at [www.lansdale.org](http://www.lansdale.org). You should apply early so that your application can go through zoning review. Once approved by the zoning officer you can begin your tenant fit

out and should schedule the U & O inspection for after you are ready to open but before you actually open.

You will need a sign permit for any signs you want to display. The permitting process for signs takes approximately two weeks so please apply accordingly.

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## Tenant Fit Out Information

Step One: Determine if you need a building permit.

What will you be doing to the space before you move in?

If you will be doing wallpaper, painting, tiling, changing electrical or plumbing fixtures in kind or installing partitions you **DO NOT** need a permit.

If you will be constructing, demolishing or altering structural components including windows, doors, doorways or bathrooms you **WILL** need a permit.

\*\*if you need a building permit you may need Pennsylvania State Labor and Industry ADA Paperwork. Please ask for further information\*\*

Step Two: Determine if you need an electrical, mechanical or plumbing permit. If you will be installing electric wiring, adding or removing plumbing or installing any heating, ventilation or other fixed mechanical equipment you may need those permits. Changing one light fixture or one sink to another does not necessitate a permit—**adding a fixture where there is not already one does require a permit.**

## Background

The Borough of Lansdale has several ordinances in place that impact opening or relocating a business. This guide is designed to help you navigate through the process. You will need to view a copy of the Lansdale Borough Code Book which is available online at our website [www.lansdale.org](http://www.lansdale.org) or in person at Borough Hall (Monday through Friday 8:30 am until 4:30 pm). The Department recommends that you check zoning of the property prior to signing a lease.

Look up the parking requirements for your use in Chapter 122, Article XX, Section 122-2003B.

How many parking spaces do you need to provide? \_\_\_\_\_

How many spaces does your proposed property have? \_\_\_\_\_

(Note that these spaces must be dedicated to your location during hours of operations)

Does your proposed location have enough parking spaces?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



# Checklist

***Lansdale Borough has a downtown that fosters independent businesses. Before opening up shop, there are a couple steps to take and register with the Borough.***

## Determine Type of Use

\_\_\_\_\_ Determine if the proposed use is a permitted use by right within Zoning District or if it requires a zoning variance / special exception from the Zoning Hearing Board. If it is not permitted by right, action by the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) will be required.

\_\_\_\_\_ Determine if there were any prior zoning variances / special exceptions granted for the property and if the proposed use can comply with the conditions of the prior ZHB decision (if any).

\_\_\_\_\_ Determine if the building is a non-conforming (grandfathered) use. If so, determine if the proposed use meets the terms of the prior non-conforming use or if it is an expansion

## Permits

\_\_\_\_\_ If any construction, alteration, repair, removal or demolition are contemplated to the interior or exterior of an existing building, a building permit and inspection **WILL NOT** be required.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Borough Zoning Officer determines if a use and re-occupancy inspection will be required for the proposed use (s).

\_\_\_\_\_ The Fire Marshal determines if a fire inspection and / or a sprinkler protection system are required.

## Licenses

\_\_\_\_\_ If the proposed use is permitted by right as determined by the Zoning Officer, property owners next obtain a license(s). A mercantile license is required for a retail, wholesale or restaurant business. A business privilege license is required for service businesses or for any work performed on a commission basis or home business.

\_\_\_\_\_ Restaurants and other food establishments require a license from the Montgomery County Health Department. **(215.784.5415)** Upon County approval, call the Borough again for plan approval prior to issue of permit.

## Determine Zoning Issues

\_\_\_\_\_ Borough Zoning Ordinance governs size, quantity, number and placement of signage. A sign permit will be required for changes to existing signs and for any new signage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check Borough Parking Requirements

# Welcome!

*Lansdale Borough is a progressive community that continues to grow...and we are here to help!*

*Please feel free to contact the Department of Community Development as you navigate through starting your business in Lansdale Borough.*

