

# Before Choosing a Business Location in Kirkland

## Frequently Asked Questions



The City of Kirkland wants you to have success with your new or expanding business. The [Development Services Center](#) encourages you to consider the following questions before you decide on a location, move into a new space or expand your current business. The resources referenced in this handout are available at City Hall or online at [www.MyBuildingPermit.com](http://www.MyBuildingPermit.com). Additional business resources and assistance can be found at the City of Kirkland's [Economic Development](#) website.

- Is this an allowable use?
- Is this a change of use?
- When is a permit required?
- Will modifications to an existing space be required?
- Is Design Review required?
- Will I have to pay traffic impact fees?
- How much will a permit cost?
- Is a business license required?

### Is this an allowable use?

This should be the first question you verify with the City. The City's zoning and building codes regulate the types of uses in designated land use areas and in certain types of structures.

To determine the zoning of your property and the types of allowed uses, call or visit the [Planning and Building Department](#). Planning staff will review the zoning map and land use chart to determine if your proposed use is allowed. You may also review the planning information on the GIS Interactive Map found at the [Kirkland CityHub Online](#) website.

To ensure the space is building code compliant or to learn if improvements must be made in order to accommodate your business, call and speak with our Building staff, or visit the [Planning and Building Department](#) website.

### Is this a Change of Use?

A change in use occurs when the existing nature of the existing or previous activities taking place on the property differs from what you are proposing.

A change of "use" as defined in the [Kirkland Zoning Code](#) (KZC) refers to the nature of activities taking place on private property or within structures. Each separate listing under the "use" column in the Chapters 15-60 KZC is a separate use.

A change of use as defined in the [Building Code](#) is when the

occupancy classification or characteristics of the occupancy are changing (such as a warehouse space being changed to a retail or office space).

### When is a permit required?

Building permits are required when there are modifications to walls, ceilings or partitions over 5 ft. 9 in. in height or when there is a change of use. To have a better understanding of what permits may be required, you are encouraged to request a pre-submittal meeting. [Refer to [Building Permit Checklist for Tenant Improvements](#)]

Other City permits are required for:

- Modifications to the electrical system, such as lighting and outlet modifications.
- Modifications to the plumbing system such as sinks, toilets, urinals or plumbing pipe modifications.
- Modifications to the mechanical system such as heating and cooling ducts, air conditioning units, furnaces, gas piping, hoods and exhaust fan modifications.
- The installation of any signs. [Refer to "[Signs: A Guide To Signs In Kirkland](#)"]
- Modifications to the fire alarm or fire sprinklers systems.
- Outdoor seating and café permits. If you wish to have outdoor seating or a sidewalk café, please contact the [Public Works Department](#) at 425-587-3800.

When a property undergoes a change of use as described above, different zoning regulations may apply for additional

### Will modifications to an existing space be required?

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parking or landscaping. Upgrades to the parking area may also require upgrades to the storm water retention system. A change in use may also require additional restrooms or barrier free accessibility upgrades such as the addition of a ramp at the entry.

### Is Design Review required?

If you have a project and are proposing to work on the exterior of the structure, your project may need to be reviewed by the City's Design Review Board. You will need to check with a planner and/or the zoning map. Please contact the [Planning and Building Department](#) prior to submitting a building permit application to determine if Design Review will be required.

### Will you have to pay traffic impact fees?

New businesses taking over or remodeling existing tenant space will not be required to pay traffic impact fees. Adding new gross floor area to existing tenant space will trigger a requirement to pay traffic impact fees. These fees vary based on size and use of the addition. As an example, if an office tenant adds 500 square feet of new space, traffic impact fees for the addition are required at the office rate. Please contact the Public Works Department to determine if traffic impact fees will be due. Traffic Impact fees are due at the time a permit is issued.

### How much will a permit cost?

Building permit fees are based off of the valuation of construction. A list of fee schedules for building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and sign permits is available at City Hall or online through the [www.MyBuildingPermit.com](http://www.MyBuildingPermit.com).

### Is a business license required?

The City requires any business operating within city limits to be licensed prior to operating. The [Business License Division](#) handles the processing of business licenses and regulatory licenses such as cabaret and pool table licenses. License application forms are available at City Hall or online through the [Finance & Administration website](#).

**Important Contact Information - Note:** City Development Services Staff (Public Works, Planning and Building Departments) are available Monday – Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM except Wednesdays from 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM.

**Kirkland City Hall**  
[www.kirklandwa.gov](http://www.kirklandwa.gov)  
123 5th Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033

**Waste Management Sno-King**  
T. 425-814-1695

**Public Works Department**  
<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Public-Works-Department>  
T. 425-587-3800 F. 425-587-3807  
Emergencies: 425-587-3900

**MyBuildingPermit.com**  
[www.MyBuildingPermit.com](http://www.MyBuildingPermit.com)

**Planning and Building Department**  
T. 425-587-3600 F. 425-587-3232  
<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Planning-and-Building>

**Finance and Administrative Services Department  
Business Licenses**  
T. 425-587-3140 F. 425-587-3110  
<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Business.htm>

**Kirkland Fire Department**  
T. 425-587-3650 F. 425-587-3651  
<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Fire-Department>

**Our Kirkland – Ask A Question – Request Service**  
Monitored Monday – Friday, 8 AM – 5 PM  
<https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Government/Departments/Finance-and-Administration/Our-Kirkland>