

About Parking Lots and Public Garages Licensing ([MCC 4-232-130](#))

“**Public Garage**” means any building, structure, premises, enclosure or other place, except a public way, within the city, where four or more motor vehicles are stored, housed or parked for hire, in a condition ready for use, or where rent or compensation is paid to the owner, manager or lessee of the premises for the housing, storing, sheltering or keeping of such motor vehicles.

“**Accessory Garage**” as used in this chapter, means any building, structure, premises, enclosure or other place, which makes four or more parking spaces available, for any fee or charge, to residents, tenants, users, employees and/or guests of the principle use located on the same zoning lot where the garage is located and makes such parking only available to such residents, tenants, users, employees and guests of the principle use located on the same zoning lot where the garage is located, *and not to the general public.*

Pre-Application Checklist

The following activities must be completed **BEFORE** applying for any business license.

- ✓ [Check your Zoning designation](#). Verify that your proposed business activities are allowed at your potential business location.
 - DO NOT enter into any financial commitments (i.e. Commercial lease, Construction/build-out) unless you are certain that you are in the proper zoning district that allows the proposed business activity.
 - DO NOT assume the previous owner’s zoning designation applies.
- ✓ [Register your business with ALL of the appropriate government agencies](#).
- ✓ [Check state or federal laws and requirements](#).

How do I apply?

You may apply for a license by going online at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp, and then click on [Apply for a License](#), or in person at the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) office in City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 800. An appointment is recommended and can be made by calling (312) 74-GOBIZ / (312) 744-6249, or by going online at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp, and then click on [Schedule An Appointment With A Business Consultant](#).

STEP 1: LICENSE APPLICATION

- A separate license shall be required for each separate business location.
- All activities and services to be provided must be described on the application.
- License application fee: **\$19.80 per 300 square feet**. Fee is based on a two-year term.

Standard application requirements and documentation may be found in our [License Application Requirements Information](#) web page.

STEP 2: ZONING REVIEW

Every business license, location expansion and change of location application requires review and approval from the Zoning Unit of the Department of Housing and Economic Development.

The City of Chicago is divided into distinct zoning districts that reflect the diversity of business and neighborhood uses. Each zoning district has different regulations regarding the types of business activities that are permitted.

During a review, the Zoning representative looks at the following:

- Proper classification of the business activity/ies.
- If the business activity/ies is/are allowed in a specific district.
- Compliance with parking, landscape and building requirements.
- Proper building permits have been applied for/issued.

STEP 3: INSPECTION AND PERMITS

An inspection of your business location is required for certain business activities and is scheduled within 5-10 business days of license application fee(s) payment.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY	ONSITE INSPECTION TYPE
Public Garage	CFD ✓
Accessory Garage	

The **Chicago Fire Department (CFD)** – CFD is the department which ensures that fire safety and fire prevention measures are in place. Prior to receiving a **Public Garage** license, fire inspectors will conduct an onsite inspection to check for safety measures to ensure that the site is fire resistant and easy to evacuate in case of an emergency.

STEP 4: SIGNAGE AND USE OF THE PUBLIC WAY

In addition to issuing business licenses, BACP, through its Public Way Use (PWU) unit, is the department which handles general Grants of Privilege for the use of the public way. These permit applications are necessary when a business owner wishes to hang a sign, awning, or anything above, on or below the public way.

- a. Prior to hanging or constructing any sign that hangs over the public way, the applicant must file a Sign Permit Application with BACP. This detailed process includes obtaining additional permits from DOB as well as approval from the City Council. Because a sign contractor must be licensed with the City in order to obtain a sign construction permit, please see the [list of approved sign contractors](#).
- b. For temporary use of the public way (such as the temporary obstruction of a sidewalk or street for installation or construction work), contractors must obtain a Public Right of Way Use Permit from the Chicago Department of Transportation. Information about this permitting process is available at the [Regulations for Construction in the Public Way](#) web page.

For additional information, please go to our [Public Way Use](#) web page.