# Business & Permitting Guide

*Town of Swansea*

*October 2022*

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Welcome to the Town of Swansea!

Dear Prospective Business Owner,

The Town of Swansea has prepared this guide to assist folks interested in doing business in Swansea.

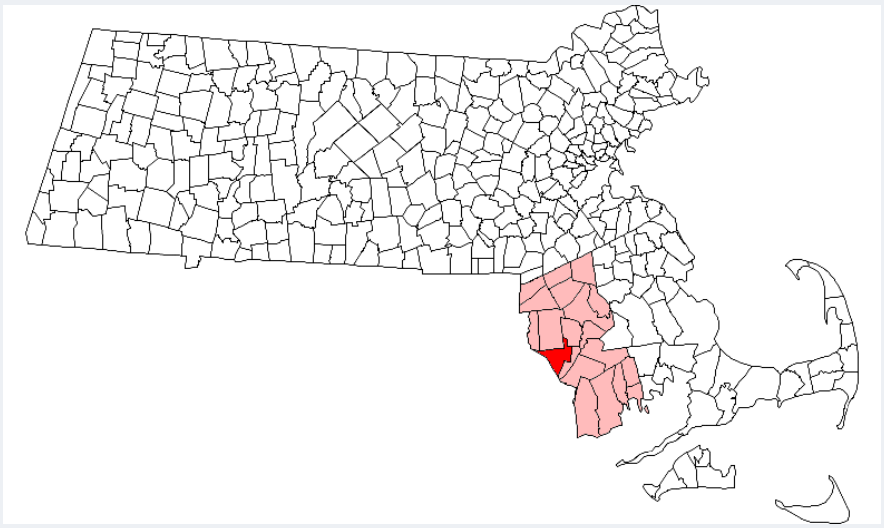
Included in this guide, you will find information on each department and from which department you may need a license or permit. While it is not an exhaustive instruction manual for every license or permit you may need, it does include the most commonly required ones and also a layout of state permitting that may also be necessary.

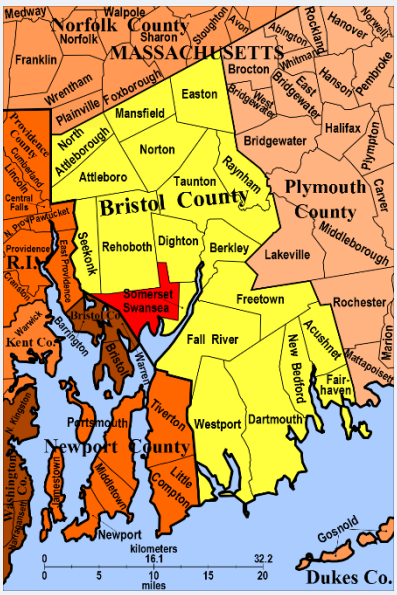
Thank you for your interest in locating in Swansea. We wish you great success in your business endeavors and are here to assist however we can.

Sincerely,
*Mallory E. Aronstein*
Mallory E. Aronstein
Town Administrator

## ABOUT SWANSEA

The Town of Swansea was first settled in 1667 and is steeped in rich history that intertwines with neighboring communities both in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, many of which were annexed from Swansea. Our location along Route 195 with two significant commercial sectors (Route 6 and Route 103), makes our community prime real estate for local business. Swansea retains its bucolic, quaint ambiance, however, with prosperous working farms sprinkled throughout the community. The Town is accessible to neighboring Fall River and serves as a gateway from Rhode Island. It also has significant natural resources, five miles of coastline, and boasts many recreational opportunities.






Swansea Demographic Snapshot

| | |
|---|---|
| Population | 17,259 |
| Households | 6580 |
| Median Age | 45.1 |
| Median Household Income | 95,945 |
| Per Capita Income | 41,198 |
| Labor Force % of Population (16+) | 67.4% |

# INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Town of Swansea welcomes you to a vibrant and engaged community that is here to help your business be as successful as possible! This guide has been created to help existing and prospective business owners in the Town of Swansea and be a tool for success. In doing so, we hope to make the process of opening your business in our town simplified and less stressful.

This permitting guide will provide an overview of our local permitting process and the appropriate contacts along the way. This guide is intended to be a source of general guidance, not as any supplement to legal advice. It does not contain an exhaustive list of all possible licensing and permitting processes. Though there is a lot of useful and valuable information in this guide, it is important to read the guide in its entirety and select the information in it that pertains to your particular type of business. There are several aspects to this guide that do pertain to every business type, while other parts are more specific. Potential business owners should realize that they may need to look elsewhere to find more specific information for their certain type of business.

The Town of Swansea's General Bylaws, Zoning Bylaws, and individual board regulations, as applicable, take precedence over any information contained within this Guide in any conflict between them. Though we will attempt to continually update the information in this handbook, all personnel and fees are subject to change. Further information can be found on our website at www.swanseama.gov.

# GETTING STARTED

Often the most difficult part of opening a new business is getting started. The Town of Swansea is committed to your success as we are here to help and provide a streamlined process for all licensing and permitting.

An initial meeting with the Town Planner to better understand the permitting process for new businesses is advisable. Key items to consider are what type of business you are seeking to locate within our community and where you propose to locate it. The type of business will dictate the permitting process, as each type requires different approvals. The location is also important to ensure viability of the business and safety of yourself, employees, and customers. The location will also determine if your proposed business requires additional approvals from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It is never too early to hold this initial meeting and, in some ways, can help to formulate or refine your final business plan.



A secondary meeting with our Technical Review Committee, depending on the complexity of your proposal, may also be worthwhile as your project can be described, questions can be asked, and issues can be identified from the start of the process. This meeting can also give you a "who's who" in the Town of Swansea and help you identify the Town officials you'll meet along the permitting trail. The Town Planner can assist with the setup of this meeting, which can include the Conservation Agent, Health Agent, Fire Chief, Highway Director, Water Superintendent, Police Chief, and Building Inspector. In doing so, you'll receive a preliminary review and identification of key aspects that may hamper your efforts.

Another primary step is ensuring tax compliance. Regardless of which permit for which you are filing, the Town of Swansea requires that all taxes and liens are paid prior to issuance. Tax compliance can be verified through the Tax Collector's Office.

As mentioned previously, all Town officials are here to assist you in accomplishing these tasks and getting ducks in a row. Holding these meetings helps us all understand your project and gives you an idea of how complex, or not, the permitting in each of these departments may be.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW FOR OPENING A NEW BUSINESS

Here are a few specific things to consider:

- **Zoning Bylaws** – Consult the Town's Zoning Bylaws to make sure your business/property meets the zoning requirements for the site: ecode360.com

- **Zoning Map** – Review the Town's Zoning Map in consultation with the Zoning Bylaws to make sure your property is located in a zoning district where your business would be allowed: https://www.axisgis.com/SwanseaMA/

- **Property Constraints** – Properties require approvals in a variety of ways, including perc rate approval for septic system, overseen by the Board of Health, and approval of a business location in proximity to wetlands, overseen by the Conservation Commission. The Planning Board also conducts a Site Plan Review process for parking, accessibility, and other constraints. Curb cut approvals, for drive ways and such, from the Highway Department and/or MassDOT is also required, depending on location.

- **Business Specific Approvals** – Permits/licenses from the Board of Health, Board of Selectmen, and the Fire Department, dependent upon the specific type of business proposed.

- **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)/Building Permit** – A CO is required from the Building Department in order to obtain a Business Certificate (see below). If any work is to be done, a building permit will also be required. For more information see: https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/building_department/permits.php

- **Signage** – If erecting a sign, either for a home-based business or a traditional business within a commercial structure, a sign permit from the Building Department will be required.

- **Business Certificate** – Most business owners need a Business Certificate, or Doing Business As (DBA), from the Town Clerk. This certificate allows you to open a commercial bank account and helps prevents others from using your business name. This form can be found at: https://www.swanseama.gov/government/town_clerk/permits___licenses/business_certificate.php

- **Legal Structure** – Whether incorporating or forming a limited partnership, the MA Corporations Division requires an excise tax and filing fee. Sole proprietors do not require registration, but you should conduct a name check with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. For more information, see: https://www.sec.state.ma.us/cor/coridx.htm

- **Federal Tax or Employer Identification Number (EIN)** – For tax purposes, you will need to define your business structure and obtain identification numbers from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for your business and staff. For more information, see: https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers

- **State Taxes** – You must receive a Sales Tax Vendor Number from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR). This should be done after you have applied for your federal tax or EIN. For more information, see: https://www.mass.gov/guides/sales-and-use-tax#-sales/use-tax-vendors-

## PERMITS/LICENSES/APPROVALS AND ESTIMATED TIMELINES

The following permits and approvals are required for ALL business types.

**Zoning Determination** – One day (if special permit or variance required, advertising of hearing, rendering of decision and appeal period can take up to 175 days but 60 days is more typical)

**Site Constraint Approvals** – Septic, Wetlands, Site Plan Review (21 days min), Curb-cut (MADOT – up to 70 days – for Routes 6, 103 and 136 north of Route 6).

**Sign Permit**-up to 30 days

**Occupancy Permit**- up to 30 days (see Fire Dept. for Occupancy Checklist)

**Business Certificate**-1 day

The following permits and approvals are required for certain business types.

**Food Establishment**

Board of Selectmen

- Common Victualler's License – need ServSafe and Certificate of Occupancy; takes 14 days, in accordance with Board of Selectmen meeting schedule.
- Liquor License – 30 days and a meeting with Police Chief; advertisement in the newspaper, background check for anyone with financial interest in the license; Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) review takes up to 6 months after approval by local authority.
- Entertainment License – up to 3 weeks for Police Department review and action by Selectmen
- Weights and Measures Seal

Board of Health

- Food, Farmer's Market and Catering Permits – issued upon completed application

Fire Dept.

- Hood/Ventilation Inspection/Permit; Suppression System Inspection/Testing – 30 days

**Retail**

Board of Selectmen

- Auto Sales Licenses – 30 days

Fire Dept./Town Clerk

- Underground Storage Tank Permits – 1 day
- LP Storage (>42 gallons)

Planning Board

- Drive-thru Special Permits – 60 days

**Service**

Board of Health

- Tanning Establishment and Septic/Rubbish Haulers Permits – issued upon completed application

**Home-Based**

Building Department

- Home Occupation Determination
    - Minor: One day
    - Major: Special Permit from Zoning Board of Appeals (approximately 60 days)

## DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

**Town Clerk's Office:** Business Certificates
81 Main St.; 508-678-9389 x2;
https://www.swanseama.gov/government/town_clerk/index.php

**Board of Selectmen:** Liquor, Entertainment, and Common Victualler's Licenses
81 Main St.; 508-678-2981 x1;
https://www.swanseama.gov/government/board_of_selectmen/index.php

**Building Department:** Certificate of Occupancy, Building/Electrical/Plumbing/Sign Permits, Home-Occupation Business/Zoning Determinations
68 Stevens Rd.; 508-324-6730 x1;
https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/building_department/index.php

**Planning Board:** Site Plan Review and Special Permit for Drive-Thrus
68 Stevens Rd.; 508-324-6730 x6;
https://www.swanseama.gov/government/planning_board/index.php

**Conservation Commission:** Wetlands Permits
68 Stevens Rd.; 508-324-6730 x5;
https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/conservation_commission/index.php

**Board of Health:** Septic Approval, Food Establishment/Catering/Farmers Market/Well Installers/Septic Hauler/Rubbish Hauler Permits
68 Stevens Rd.; 508-324-6730 x2;
https://www.swanseama.gov/government/board_of_health/index.php

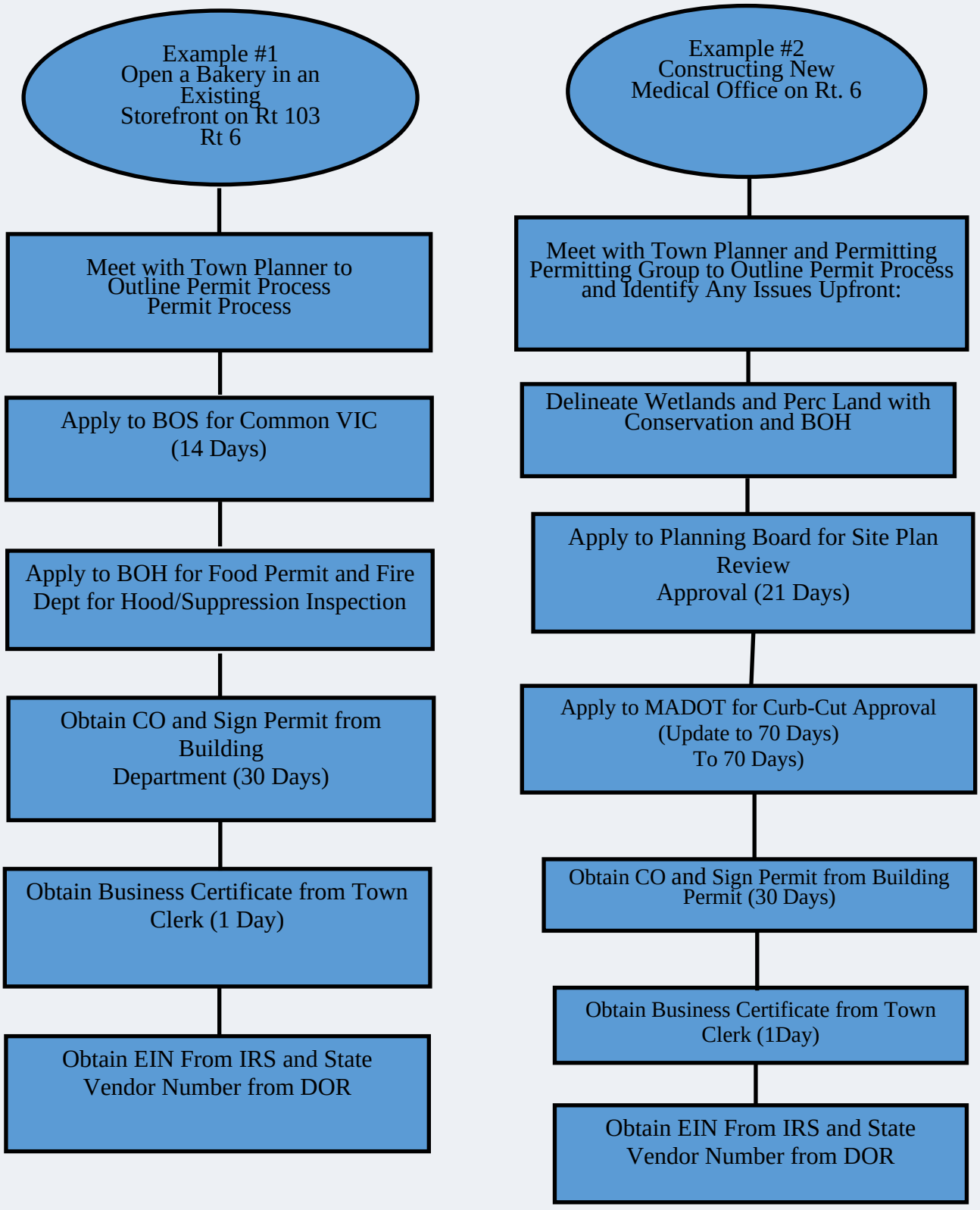
**Zoning Board:** Variances/Special Permits
81 Main St.; 508-678-9389 x2;
https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/zoning_board_of_appeals/index.php

**Highway Department:** Curb-cut Permits and Trash/Recycling Info
101 Gardners Neck Rd.; 508-678-5615;
https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/highway_department_public_works/index.php

**Fire Department:** Underground Storage Tank Permits
50 New Gardners Neck Rd.; 508-672-4305;
https://www.swanseama.gov/departments/fire_department/index.php

**Local/State Permits/Approvals**
Swansea Water District
700 Wilbur Ave.; 508-672-9746; https://swanseawaterdistrict.com/

MADOT: Rts. 6, 103, & 136 (north of Rt. 6)
1000 County St., Taunton, MA; 508-824-6633; https://www.mass.gov/locations/highway-district-5-office


Example #1
Open a Bakery in an Existing
Storefront on Rt 103
Rt 6
Meet with Town Planner to Outline Permit Process
Permit Process
Apply to BOS for Common VIC
(14 Days)
Apply to BOH for Food Permit and Fire Dept for Hood/Suppression Inspection
Obtain CO and Sign Permit from Building
Department (30 Days)
Obtain Business Certificate from Town Clerk (1 Day)
Obtain EIN From IRS and State Vendor Number from DOR
Example #2
Constructing New
Medical Office on Rt. 6
Meet with Town Planner and Permitting Permitting Group to Outline Permit Process and Identify Any Issues Upfront:
Delineate Wetlands and Perc Land with Conservation and BOH
Apply to Planning Board for Site Plan Review
Approval (21 Days)
Apply to MADOT for Curb-Cut Approval
(Update to 70 Days)
To 70 Days)
Obtain CO and Sign Permit from Building Permit (30 Days)
Obtain Business Certificate from Town Clerk (1Day)
Obtain EIN From IRS and State Vendor Number from DOR

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Technical Review Committee

Several departments involved with permitting the development of residential and commercial sites meets monthly to review plans and provide comments to applicants. These departments include the Town Planner, Highway Director, Fire Chief, Conservation Agent, and Town Administrator. Additional department heads that can be brought in, based on the nature of the application, can include the Building Commissioner, Health Agent, Police Chief, and Water District Superintendent. Applicants are encouraged to attend these pre-application meetings as they are immensely helpful in identifying any issues upfront and helping to shape permit-ready projects. Requests to attend may be forwarded to the Town Planner, John Hansen Jr., at jhansen@swanseama.gov.

### Entrepreneurs of Swansea

Swansea Community Network, also known as Swansea Public Access, is a community resource that spotlights local businesses and the people who run them. This is a great free way to get the word out there about your business. They can be reached out 508-675-7483 ext. 5 or swanseacableaccess@gmail.com.

### Redevelopment Authority

In 2019, the Town of Swansea created a Redevelopment Authority to focus on assisting local developers and businesses revitalize the Swansea Mall property and to create a vibrant commercial corridor in the Town. The Town also successfully received six additional liquor licenses reserved for this district and rezoned the area for mixed use for optimal marketplace conditions.

The Redevelopment Authority is a five-member committee currently drafting an Urban Renewal Plan and examining other properties that could benefit from their work.