

ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN

NO. AB-115 :

DATE : The DATE is the effective date.

SUBJECT : Application & Permit Process

TITLE : **Application & Permit Expiration Guidelines**

PURPOSE : Clarification of application and permit expiration process

REFERENCE : Current edition of the San Francisco Building Code (SFBC) Sections 106A.3.7 & 106A.4.4.

DISCUSSION :

To ensure that projects are assigned appropriate timelines and associated permits expire in conjunction with one another, the timeline provided for an applicant to receive an issued permit, and for a permit holder to finalize a permit, have been revised via Ordinance #259-25.

Application Process

When an application is submitted, the Department will review and ensure all required documentation and payments are provided, moving the application to a 'filed' status. Once filed, the applicant is allowed 730 days to work with the Department, confirm the application and all supporting documents are code-compliant, and obtain the permit. If no permit has been issued after 730 days from filing, the application shall expire.

Demonstrating Progress

Once a permit is issued, the applicant is allowed 365 days to complete the work authorized by the permit. This timeline can be extended indefinitely in allotments of 365 days by demonstrating progress of work while the permit is active.

To demonstrate progress of work to the Department and reset the expiration date of an issued permit, permit holders must call for and complete an inspection. An inspection does not need to pass to extend the active status of a permit. Failed inspections may extend the permit, so long as the Inspector determines that material work and progress have occurred. At the discretion of the Inspector, failed inspections due to lack of work or substantive progress may be deemed insufficient to extend the active status of a permit. If, after a failed inspection that is deemed insufficient for an extension, the permit holder disagrees with the determination of the Inspector, the permit holder may ask the Inspector's supervisor to review.

Once an inspection has been deemed sufficient by the Inspector, the permit will be granted an additional 365 days from the date of the inspection to complete the authorized work. Additional calls for inspections will, depending on the result of the inspection, extend the active status of the permit by an additional 365 days from the date of these inspections.

Inspectors will be required to maintain documentation of inspections and log notes with information detailing why it was or was not sufficient for an extension.

Trade Permits

Trade permits will have a separate, distinct timeline and will not alter the expiration dates for full or site permits. Trade permits shall be subject to the same requirements present in SFBC Section 106A.3.7, 106A.4.4 and this Administrative Bulletin, resulting in a rolling 365-day timeline.

Site and Revision Permits

Site permits will be provided a 365-day active status and governed by the same guidelines as full permits. However, each time a permit holder files a site permit addendum, or an altered site permit is issued, the expiration timeline for the base site permit is extended an additional 365 days, similar to the completion of an inspection.

Any issued permits that are intended to revise an original permit shall be subject to the same timeline assigned to the originating permit and shall expire concurrently.

Commencement and Recommencement Permits

If a permit holder commences work, but the permit expires before the authorized work is complete, the permit holder must pursue a recommencement permit as described in Section SFBC 106A.4.4.2, including payment of an additional fee based upon the valuation of the uncompleted work.

If a permit holder does not commence work and the permit expires, that permit is null and void, and the permit holder must apply for a new permit. Commencement permits as described in SFBC Section 106A.4.4.1 shall no longer be issued for permits subject to this Administrative Bulletin.

Over-the-Counter Permits

Permits eligible for over-the-counter (OTC) review will be subject to the application timelines present in this Administrative Bulletin. Despite OTC applications typically being issued within the same day as the application is filed, customers sometimes leave an OTC application in the filed status without finishing the necessary steps for issuance. In these circumstances, an application left in the filed status for 730 days without issuance will be null and void.

Extension Requests

An application shall expire if no permit has been issued 730 days after the application was filed. In instances in which justifiable cause is demonstrated by the applicant prior to the application expiration, the Building Official can grant extensions of up to 180 days, as needed.

After a permit is issued, if work is commenced and additional time is needed before an inspection can occur, the Building Official has the discretion to approve extensions of 180 days if justifiable cause has been demonstrated.

Per SFBC 106A.3.7, the Department shall notify applicants when their application is set to expire in 60 days.

Transitioning to New Code

Ordinance #259-25 takes effect on June 21, 2026. Any applications filed or permits issued prior to that date will be subject to the timelines and rules present in the code at the time of filing and will maintain those rules for the lifetime of the application and permit. The guidelines set forth in this Administrative Bulletin shall apply only to applications filed on and after June 21, 2026.

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Date

Approved by the Building Inspection Commission on (date)