



HAYS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

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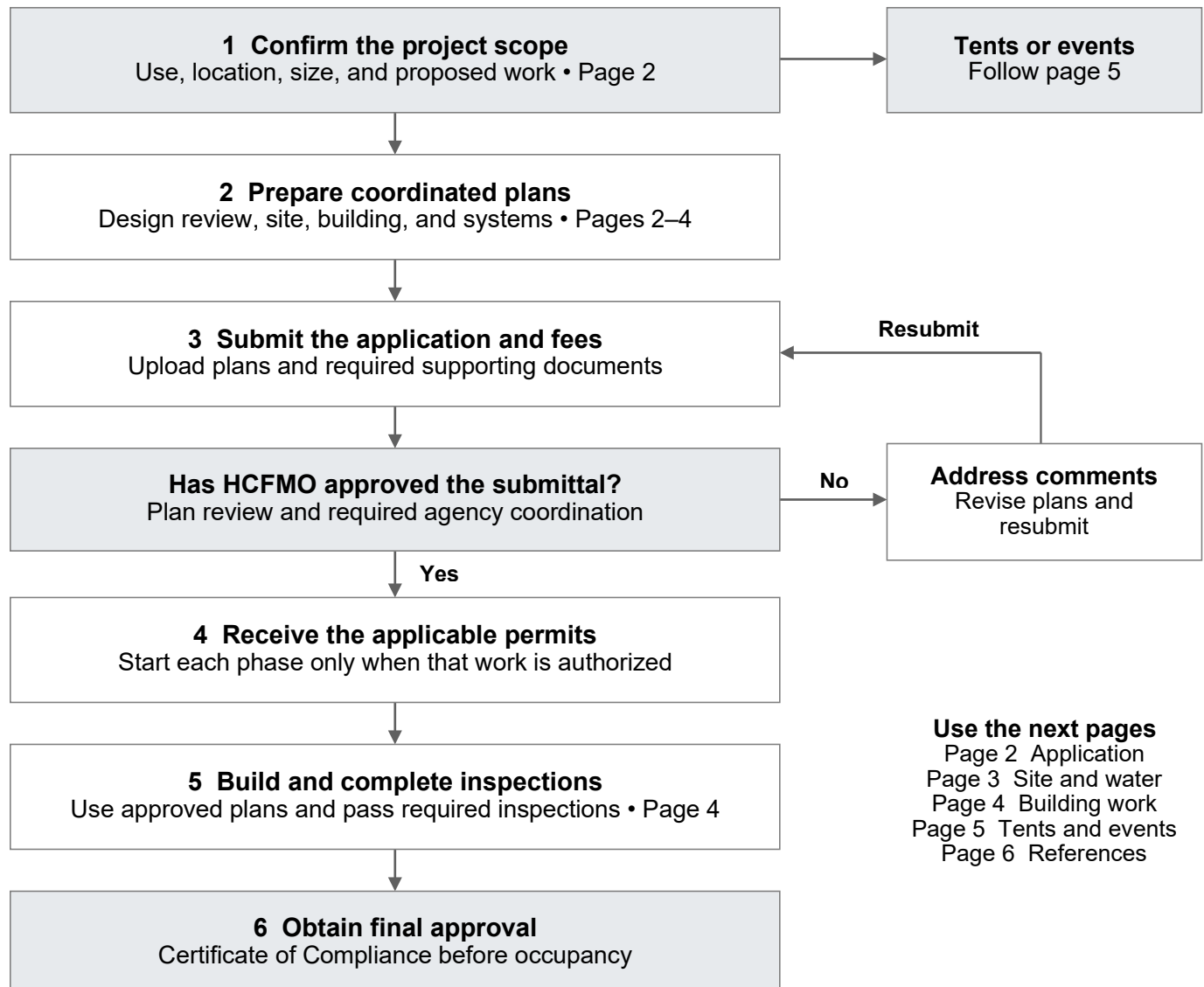


Permitting Process

Applicant Guide and Flow Chart

Use this guide to move from project planning to permits, inspections, and final approval. Start by confirming Hays County Fire Marshal's Office (HCFMO) jurisdiction and the permits your project needs. Use the two companion submittal requirement sheets to prepare the plans.

The process below follows the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC), Hays County amendments, and county procedures. Each permit authorizes only its approved scope of work. [1–3]



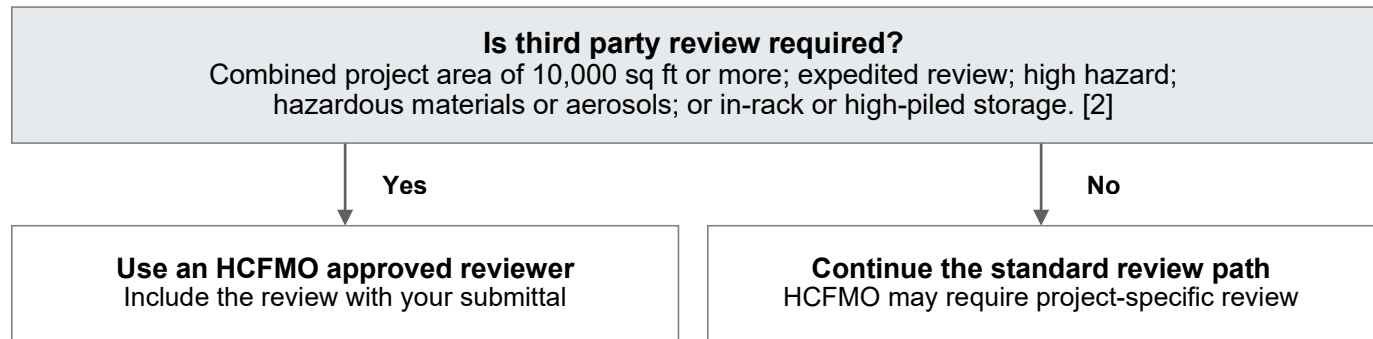
Site, building, and system reviews may overlap when HCFMO allows. Separate permits and required inspections still apply. Numbered references are listed on page 6.

1 Confirm scope and prepare the application

Confirm the project address, jurisdiction, proposed use, building count, total project area, and whether the work is new construction, an addition, a renovation, or a change of use. Identify the permits and outside agency approvals with HCFMO before preparing the final submittal. [1, 3]

Determine professional design and review requirements

Check the official Texas engineering and architectural decision charts linked on page 6. Each profession has separate requirements and exemptions. Retain the required design professionals and provide signed and sealed plans for the applicable disciplines, following the companion submittal sheets. [4, 9]



For all fire protection system submittals, arrange review by a licensed fire protection engineer on HCFMO's approved list. Verify the selected reviewer before commissioning the review. This review step is separate from the designer's required seal. [3, 9]

Use the companion sheets to build one coordinated submittal

Submittal sheet	Use it to prepare
Site Plan Submittal Requirements	Project and structure data; fire apparatus access; the dedicated fire protection sheet; fire flow and water supply documentation; hydrants, gates, and underground fire line coordination.
Building Plan Submittal Requirements	Cover sheet; construction type and occupancy; area and volume; egress; fire-rated construction; fire protection and life safety features; and coordinated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing plans.

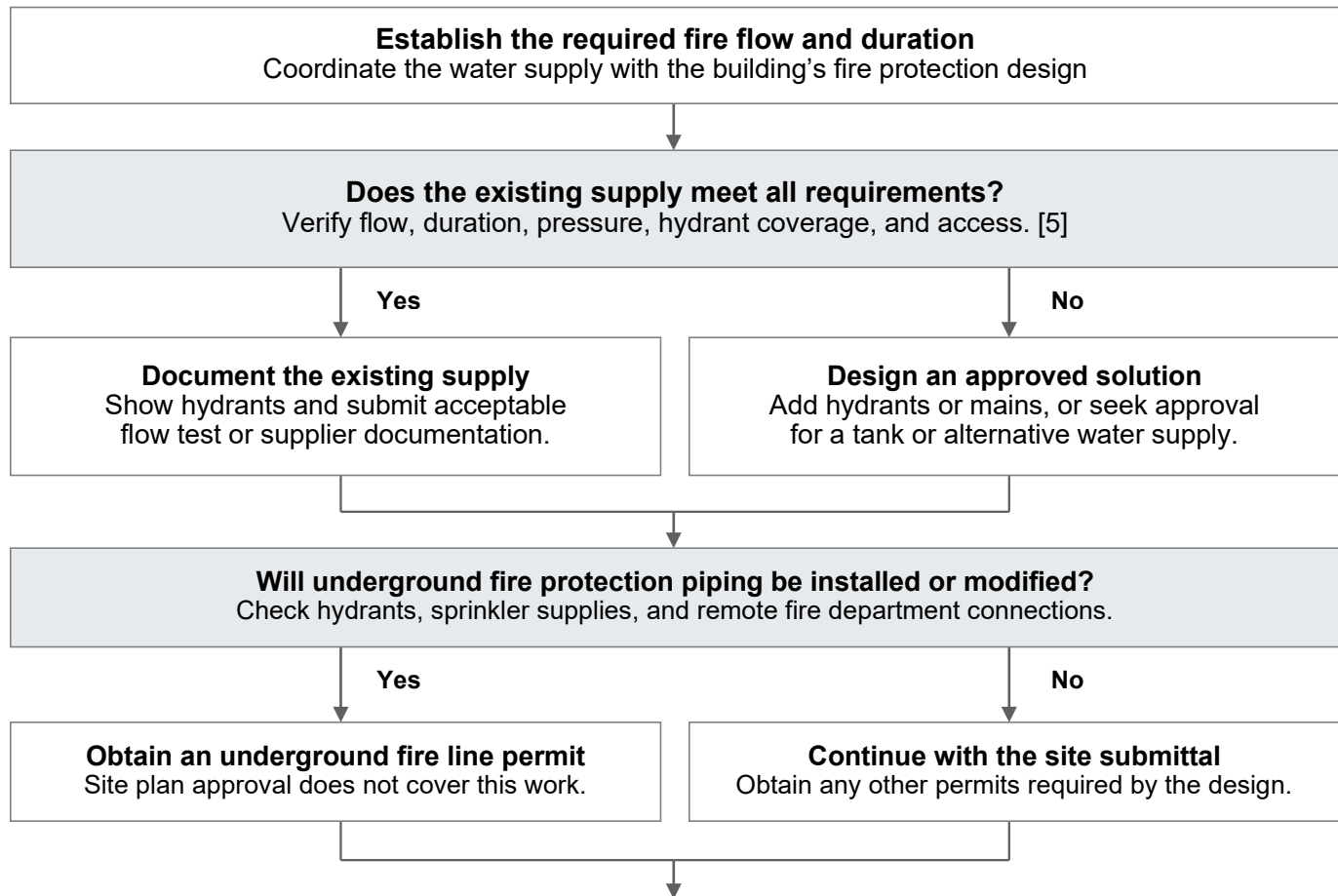
Coordinate other required approvals

Obtain applicable OSSF, floodplain, and 911 addressing approvals through Development Services. Obtain driveway approval from Hays County Transportation or TxDOT, as appropriate. Include required TNR or TDLR information when applicable. Refer to "Required permits" and "Cover page requirements" in the Site Plan sheet. [9]

Submit applications, supporting documents, and inspection requests through www.HaysCountyPermits.com. Resolve plan review comments and pay the applicable fees before permit issuance. [2, 3]

2 Resolve site access and fire protection water supply

Use this same decision path for one building, multiple buildings, and subdivisions. Evaluate each building and phase of development; a hydrant serving one structure may not serve every structure. [5, 9]



Obtain site approval and permits for the selected design

A tank or other alternative supply requires HCFMO approval and the applicable alternative fire protection system permit. New or modified gates or barricades across fire apparatus access roads require separate approval and permitting. [2, 5, 9]

Document both coverage and water capacity

Begin with the IFC's 400-foot hydrant coverage criterion, measured along an approved route around the building exterior. Confirm any applicable exception with HCFMO. A nearby hydrant alone does not demonstrate adequate flow, pressure, or duration. [5]

Follow "Water supply documentation" in the Site Plan sheet. Hydrant flow tests must be dated within six months. The sheet's 400-foot commercial and 600-foot residential test-location criteria do not automatically establish allowable hydrant coverage. [9]

Meet the construction milestones

Follow the Site Plan sheet's "Access and water supply during construction": required access roads and fire protection water supplies must be installed, tested, and approved before work proceeds beyond a structure's foundation. For early or phased work, obtain a Site Preparation and Foundation Permit if required by HCFMO; its scope is limited to the work authorized. [2, 9]

3 Obtain building and system permits

Obtain a building permit for each structure and the separate system permits needed for the work. Coordinate the Building Plan Submittal Requirements with the approved site and water supply design. Obtain approval before installing or modifying a regulated system. [2, 6, 9]

Work or system	Decision and submittal action
Automatic sprinklers	Determine the requirement under IFC 903.2 using occupancy, fire area, height, and hazards. A total building area of 12,000 sq ft is not a universal trigger. Submit sprinkler plans when installation or modification is required.
Fire alarm and detection	Evaluate occupancy, occupant load, and building layout under IFC 907.2. Coordinate HVAC duct smoke detection separately under IFC 907.3.1; airflow alone does not decide whether a building fire alarm is required.
Commercial kitchen hood and suppression	Evaluate cooking equipment and applicable hood requirements. Grease-producing cooking may require a Type I hood and a listed automatic extinguishing system. Coordinate the hood and suppression submittals under IFC 904.12 and the applicable mechanical code.
Fire pumps and standpipes	Use hydraulic calculations and applicable system requirements to determine whether a fire pump or standpipe is needed. Verify available flow as well as pressure. Obtain the applicable permits under IFC 913 and 905.
Underground lines and alternative supplies	Coordinate these separate permits with the site design on page 3. Include new hydrants, sprinkler supplies, remote connections, and water storage tanks as applicable.
HVAC, Electrical and Plumbing work	Submit required work authorizations and licensed contractor information for each applicable trade. Coordinate the trade plans with the approved life safety and fire protection design.

System decisions: 2018 IFC Chapter 9 and applicable referenced standards [6]. Local permit categories and work authorizations: HCFMO [2]. Check for additional permits when special hazards or operations are proposed.

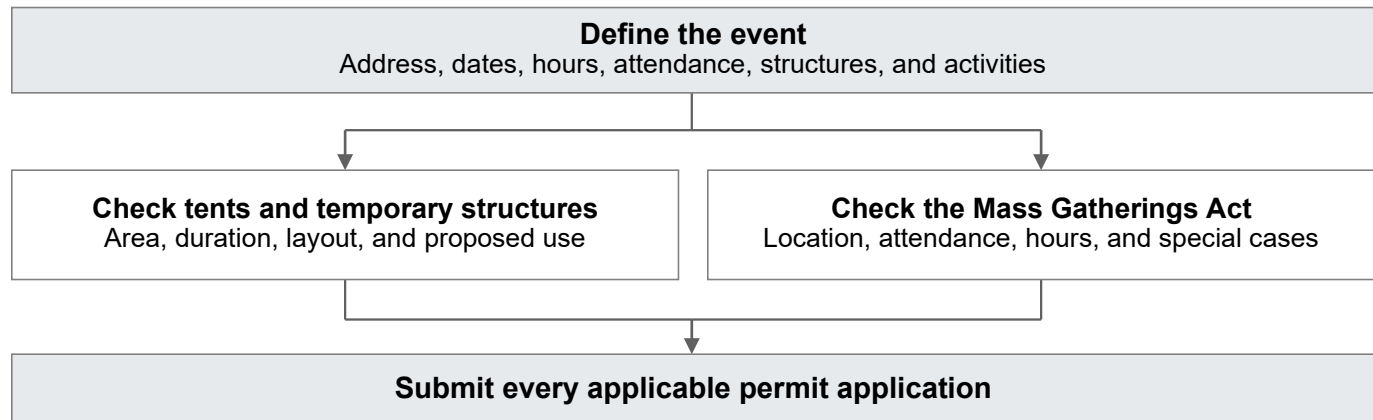
Move from construction to final approval

1. Keep approved plans on site. Arrange required inspections before work is concealed, including underground fire lines. Submit proposed plan changes for approval before proceeding with the changed work.
2. Complete required third party structural and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing inspections. Complete fire protection acceptance tests and correct deficiencies.
3. Upload the required inspection reports and final inspection request documentation. Provide the life safety plan as a PDF and the architectural DWG file required by the Building Plan sheet. Request the HCFMO final inspection through the permit portal.
4. If the final inspection identifies deficiencies, correct them and request reinspection. Obtain the Certificate of Compliance before occupancy. Any limited or conditional occupancy requires HCFMO's written authorization.

Final approval and inspections: Hays County Fire Code Sections 5.1–5.4 [1], HCFMO procedures [3], and "Plan approval and inspection documents" in the Building Plan sheet [9].

4 Follow the event and temporary structure path

An event may need both a tent or temporary structure permit and a mass gathering permit. Complete both checks below. Any new permanent construction also follows the building process on pages 1–4.



Tents and temporary membrane structures

The 2018 IFC generally requires approval for tents and membrane structures over 400 sq ft. Section 3103.2 contains limited exceptions, including recreational camping tents and qualifying open-sided tents. Confirm an exception with HCFMO before relying on it. If the structure will be used for more than 180 days in a 12-month period, follow the building permit path. [2, 7]

Mass gathering permit criteria

For the general definition in Texas Health and Safety Code Section 751.002, all three conditions below must be met. Evaluate reasonably expected attendance as well as actual attendance. [8]

5. The gathering is outside the limits of a municipality.
6. Attendance exceeds 2,500 people; or attendance exceeds 500 people, at least 51% are reasonably expected to be under age 21, and alcohol sales, service, or consumption at or around the event are planned or reasonably expected.
7. Participants will remain for more than five continuous hours, or for any time between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.

When a mass gathering permit is required, submit the application to the county judge at least 45 days before the event and coordinate the county's review process with HCFMO. Certain horse or greyhound races have a separate permit trigger under Section 751.0021; ask HCFMO about that path when applicable. [8]

Prepare the plans and complete the site inspection

Provide a site map and life safety plan. Show attendance or occupant load, exits, emergency access, tents and other structures, and cooking or fuel locations. Include medical, security, and other event arrangements required for the application. [7, 8, 9]

Complete plan review, obtain the required permits, and arrange the site inspection. Correct deficiencies and obtain required approval before opening the event. Continue to maintain approved access, exits, and fire safety measures during use. [3, 7]

5 References and companion documents

Use the links below for the underlying requirements and current application resources. The companion sheets provide the detailed plan checklists. Apply the adopted code, county amendments, and project-specific HCFMO determinations together.

1 Hays County Fire Code and Amendments

Permit scope, applications, inspections, and Certificates of Compliance. See Sections 4 and 5; local amendments supplement the 2018 IFC.

2 HCFMO Fee Schedule effective January 1 2026

Third party review triggers; building, site preparation and foundation, fire protection, temporary structure, and trade authorization categories. No fee amounts are reproduced in this guide.

3 HCFMO Permit Portal and Resource Page

Applications, inspection requests, the approved third party vendor list, and system-specific submittal requirements.

Additional county guidance: Prevention and Compliance Division

4 Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors Decision Chart

Check engineering requirements and exemptions for the proposed scope. Also use the separate architectural chart linked below.

Architectural requirements: Texas Board of Architectural Examiners Decision Chart

5 2018 IFC Chapter 5 Fire Service Features

Sections 503 and 507: access roads and gates; required water supply, fire flow, tests, and hydrant coverage, including Section 507.5.1.

6 2018 IFC Chapter 9 Fire Protection and Life Safety Systems

Sections 901, 903, 904.12, 905, 907, and 913: system approval and testing, sprinklers, cooking systems, standpipes, alarms, and pumps.

7 2018 IFC Chapter 31 Tents and Temporary Structures

Sections 3103 and 3104: approval, temporary use, plans, access, exits, and fire safety precautions.

8 Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 751 Mass Gatherings Act

Sections 751.002–751.006: general criteria, certain rules, permit applications, investigations, and the county judge's process.

9 Abbreviations:

Abbreviations: IFC = International Fire Code; OSSF = on-site sewage facility; TxDOT = Texas Department of Transportation; TDLR = Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; DWG = drawing file format.

Working document revised September 15, 2026.