



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA  
Ministry of the Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy

Department of Planning

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Many FAQs can be answered by our Guidance Notes, which are available at the Department’s website [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm) or the Planning Front Desk.**

**General .....3**

- 1. Where can I obtain a copy of the Government Survey Maps for properties or areas of the island? ..... 3
- 2. Where do I obtain an address for a new building or residence? ..... 3
- 3. How do I obtain an Assessment Number? ..... 3

**Development Control .....4**

- 4. What types of development require planning approval? ..... 4
- 5. What is the difference between a Permitted Development Permit and a full planning application? ..... 4
- 6. When do I need to submit a Subdivision application? ..... 4
- 7. How do I go about submitting an application? ..... 4
- 8. Where can I find the planning policies against which my application will be assessed? ..... 5
- 9. What happens to my application after I submit it? ..... 5
- 10. What is the Development Applications Board? ..... 6
- 11. How long will it take to receive Planning Approval? ..... 6
- 12. How will I know when the Development Applications Board has made a decision on my application? ..... 7
- 13. Can I start building once I receive Planning Approval? ..... 7
- 14. I have been granted planning permission but want to make minor changes; do I have to submit a whole new application? ..... 7
- 15. How long does Planning Approval last for? ..... 7
- 16. How long does subdivision approval last for? ..... 7
- 17. Can I have a copy of any plans submitted for a development application? ..... 8
- 18. What options do I have if the Development Applications Board (DAB) refuses my application? ..... 8

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**Department of Planning  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Building Control .....9**

- 19. Can I submit my Building Permit Application with my Planning Application? ..... 9
- 20. How do I get my Occupancy Certificate? ..... 9
- 21. Where can I find out about the Building Rules? ..... 9
- 22. Can I occupy part of my house, for example the apartment, while the unfinished part is still being constructed? ..... 9

**Enforcement .....10**

- 23. How can I make a Complaint about a land/building use or development? ..... 10

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## Department of Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### General

1. **Where can I obtain a copy of the Government Survey Maps (formerly the Ordnance Survey Maps) for properties or areas of the island?**

**Answer:** Copies of survey maps, called the Topographic Mapping Database (TMD2003), can be viewed at [www.bermudamaps.bm](http://www.bermudamaps.bm) or hardcopy maps can be ordered from the Land Title Registry Office, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Victoria Hall, 11 Victoria Street, Hamilton, HM 11, tel: 294-9260, email: [landtitleregistryoffice@gov.bm](mailto:landtitleregistryoffice@gov.bm).

2. **Where do I obtain an address for a new building or residence?**

**Answer:** Official addresses are issued by the Land Title Registry Office once your Occupancy Certificate has been issued for your new unit. For assistance please contact the Land Title Registry Office, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Victoria Hall, 11 Victoria Street, Hamilton, HM 11, tel: 294-9260, email: [landtitleregistryoffice@gov.bm](mailto:landtitleregistryoffice@gov.bm).

3. **How do I obtain an Assessment Number?**

**Answer:** A copy of your Occupancy Certificate issued by the Building Control Section will be sent to the Department of Land Valuation which will then create a new Assessment Number and advise you accordingly. You can visit their website at [www.landvaluation.bm](http://www.landvaluation.bm) or call 297-7964 for assistance.

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### Development Control

#### 4. What types of development require planning approval?

**Answer:** All forms of development require planning approval either as a Permitted Development Permit or a full Planning application. Examples of all application forms and the fee schedule can be viewed at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm) and are available from the Department of Planning.

#### 5. What is the difference between a Permitted Development Permit and a full planning application?

**Answer:** A Permitted Development Permit is for minor works permitted under the General Development Order 1999 (GDO). A Permitted Development Permit is reviewed by both planning and building control officers and is typically approved in a one to three week timeframe. For these applications, once approved, there is no need to seek a separate building permit. A full planning application is required for all forms of development that are not specifically permitted by the GDO. Forms for both types of applications and the relevant Guidance Notes can be viewed on the Planning website at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm).

#### 6. When do I need to submit a Subdivision application?

**Answer:** A Subdivision application must be submitted when creating an additional lot, amalgamating lots, adjusting a boundary, as well as creating, re-aligning or relinquishing an easement or Right-of-Way.

#### 7. How do I go about submitting an application?

**Answer:**

**Step 1.** Collect an application form and application form guidelines from the Department of Planning and review all information requirements.

**Step 2.** Review the Fee Schedule at the Department of Planning or can be downloaded [here](#).

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## **Department of Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Step 3.** Determine the zoning(s) of your property using the official hard copy of the Bermuda Plan 2008 Zoning Maps at the Department of Planning or online with the Mapping Application on the Department's website [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm). It is important to note that if there is a discrepancy between the hard copy map and the online map, the hard copy takes precedence as it was approved by the legislature.

**Step 4.** Review all zoning regulations and policies which apply to the application site in the Bermuda Plan 2008, City Plan and/or Guidance Notes at the Department of Planning or online at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm).

**Step 5.** Submit the completed application form, required plans and any supporting documentation with the application fee receipt. Our front desk staff will assist you with the fee receipt.

Depending on the complexity of the application you may need to seek the assistance of an agent to act on your behalf. Agents such as Architects, Architectural Draftsmen, Engineers, Planners and Surveyors are listed in the yellow pages of the Bermuda Telephone Directory.

### **8. Where can I find the planning policies against which my application will be assessed?**

**Answer:** The applicable policies can be found in the Bermuda Plan 2008, the City of Hamilton Plan 2001 and Development Control Guidance Notes may be viewed at the Department of Planning or online at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm).

### **9. What happens to my application after I submit it?**

**Answer:** The application will be screened to ensure that a complete application has been submitted. Once deemed complete, a file is created and an application number is assigned. The application is then advertised in the official gazette which commences a 14 day objection period. If objections to the application are received, copies will be provided to the agent (or the applicant when an agent has not been appointed) for a response.

Applications will be assigned to a technical officer and will be assessed in the date order received. An initial assessment, which includes a site visit, is undertaken by the technical officer. It is important to indicate on your application form whether there are dogs on the property for the safety of the

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technical officer. Consultations may be made with other Government Ministries, Boards and Departments, determined by the nature of the application, in order to obtain expert opinion and advice. If additional information is required, the technical officer will contact the agent/applicant.

If the application is in compliance with the relevant Plan policies and can be supported by the Department of Planning, it will proceed to the Development Applications Board with a recommendation for approval. If an application is not considered to comply with the relevant Plan policies, the agent/applicant will be advised of the issues and have an opportunity to provide additional information or revise the application.

If the revisions made achieve compliance with the Plan policy the application will be recommended for approval; if the development fails to comply with the Plan policy it will be recommended for refusal.

You may visit the Department of Planning at any point to review any relevant public documents on file. You may also view the progress of your application online at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm).

### **10. What is the Development Applications Board?**

**Answer:** The Development Applications Board (DAB) is an independent body of 12 members appointed annually by the Minister of the Environment and Sports to make decisions on planning and subdivision applications. The names of the members of the DAB are published in the official gazette at the start of each year when Government Boards are gazetted. The DAB generally meets each week to determine applications. The DAB agenda is posted on a notice board in the reception area of the Department of Planning each week and online for information only at [www.planning.gov.bm](http://www.planning.gov.bm). The DAB will consider an application one week and will confirm the decision at the following week's meeting. Decisions are, therefore, issued by the DAB the week after the application is on the DAB agenda.

### **11. How long will it take to receive Planning Approval?**

**Answer:** Currently it takes approximately twelve weeks for an application to reach the Development Applications Board. However the time frame is a function of its complexity and volume of the applications that the Department receives.

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## Department of Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**12. How will I know when the Development Applications Board has made a decision on my application?**

**Answer:** The Development Applications Board issues a decision letter which will be mailed to the agent/applicant. The decision letter sets out conditions that must be complied with when an application has been approved or sets out the reasons why an application has been refused.

**13. Can I start building once I receive Planning Approval?**

**Answer:** No, you will need to submit a Building Permit Application in order to receive a Building Permit before any construction starts. Generally this is the first condition stated on the decision letter issued by the Development Applications Board.

**14. I have been granted planning permission but want to make minor changes; do I have to submit a whole new application?**

**Answer:** No, you can submit a Revision Form and revised plans reflecting the requested changes. All changes must be noted on the Revision Form and be made clear on the plans submitted (bubbled and highlighted). Changes submitted as revisions should not exceed the scope of work that would be able to be approved under a Permitted Development Permit application and should generally be in keeping with the original approval.

**15. How long does Planning Approval last for?**

**Answer:** Planning approval lasts for two years from the date of approval, unless a longer time period is specified when the application is approved. The applicant can request to renew his/her planning approval for another two years prior to the expiration date of the original approval. Application for renewals can be submitted up to three months prior to the approval expiration date.

**16. How long does subdivision approval last for?**

**Answer:** Approval of a draft plan of subdivision lasts for three years. Once a final plan of subdivision is approved by the Development Applications Board the plan is registered by the Minister of the Environment and Sports. A registered

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subdivision plan continues to have effect unless it is superseded by a later registered plan of subdivision for the same property.

**17. Can I have a copy of any plans submitted for a development application?**

**Answer:** No. Plans are the sole property of the Architect/Draftsman who produces them. Anyone wishing to have a copy of any plan submitted to the Department of Planning must acquire copies through the relevant Agent. You can view plans on any file at the Department of Planning during regular business hours.

**18. What options do I have if the Development Applications Board (DAB) refuses my application?**

**Answer:** If an application is refused, you have the right to make an appeal against the DAB's decision within twenty one (21) days of receiving notice of refusal. Appeals are administered by the Ministry of the Environment and Sports. Alternatively you may choose to modify the application to address the reasons for refusal given by the DAB and submit a new application.

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## Department of Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Building Control

**19. Can I submit my Building Permit Application with my Planning Application?**

**Answer:** No, as of 1 February 2008, in cases where planning approval is required, building permit applications can only be submitted after the Development Applications Board has approved the corresponding planning application. Furthermore the building permit application must be accompanied by a copy of the Development Applications Board approval letter.

**20. How do I get my Occupancy Certificate?**

**Answer:** An Occupancy Certificate is issued after the Electrical, Building and Health Inspectors have finished their final inspections and signed off the project as being completed. For any enquiries, please contact the Building Control Section at 297-7755.

**21. Where can I find out about the Building Rules?**

**Answer:** The Bermuda Residential Building Code 1998 and the Bermuda Building Code 1998 are two 'must read' books available from the Department of Planning and local bookstores. The Residential Code will give clear guidelines to homeowners and contractors on everything from foundation to roof, protection of neighbouring property owners to the placement of fill materials.

**22. Can I occupy part of my house, for example the apartment, while the unfinished part is still being constructed?**

**Answer:** An apartment or portion of the main house/building can only be occupied after a Full or Partial Occupancy Certificate has been issued by the Building Control Section of the Department of Planning.

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## Department of Planning Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Enforcement

**23. How can I make a Complaint about a land/building use or development?**

**Answer:** Complete and submit a Complaint Form, which is available from the Department of Planning or download a PDF copy [here](#). For any enquiries, please contact the Enforcement Section at 297-7634.