



Starting a Business in Fort Worth A Guide on What to Expect After One Year of Operations Regarding Water and Fire

Opening a business in the City of Fort Worth requires different permits and inspections, but did you know there may be yearly items that must be maintained after you successfully open your business? Below you will find additional information and resources regarding the annual Water and Fire requirements.

Annual Requirements for Backflow/Cross-Connection Control Water Customers

Backflow/cross-connection control involves measures to prevent contaminants from flowing backward into a potable water supply through cross-connections. Cross-connections are any physical links between the potable water system and any source of contamination or pollution. Without proper control, there is a risk that harmful substances could enter the water supply, posing health risks.

Annual Compliance Requirements for Water Customers:

1. Inspection and Testing: Customers with backflow prevention devices are required to have these devices inspected and tested annually by licensed testers to ensure they are functioning correctly.
2. Documentation: Customers must maintain copies of test results provided by the licensed tester. The tester must submit the test results and inspection reports to the water utility through an online reporting system called "Vepo." A list of licensed testers may be obtained using the following link: http://www.vepollc.com/save_bpats.aspx?wid=1183
3. Maintenance and Repairs: If a backflow prevention device fails inspection or testing, it must be repaired or replaced promptly. Follow-up testing is required to confirm that the device is functioning correctly after repairs
4. Cost of Compliance: Customers are required to maintain their backflow preventers at their expense.

Failure to comply with these requirements can lead to penalties, fines, or discontinuation of water service. It is crucial for water customers to stay informed about their specific local requirements to ensure the safety of the public water supply. Additional Information Can be found at:

Contact information: (817) 392-8375 or <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/backflow>

Annual Permitting Requirements for Food Service Establishments (FSEs) and other commercial customers discharging special wastes

Food Service Establishments (FSEs) Including Restaurants and other commercial kitchens:

- Annual permit (\$175)
 - Renewal on a rolling calendar year

- Permit must be posted in a visible to the public area
- Quarterly (90 days) pump out of grease trap/interceptors by a permitted Liquid Waste Transporter
 - Pump out frequency can be increased or decreased with prior written authorization
- All records (i.e. manifests, maintenance logs) must be kept on site for 5yrs
- Must meet local limits for all parameters especially pH and Oil & Grease
 - Majority of FSEs have limits of pH 5-12 and Oil & Grease less than 250mg/L
- Must notify Pretreatment/Grease Abatement of any spills or overflows
- Grease traps/interceptors and all associated components (i.e. floor drains, clean out caps) must be in good operational condition
- Subject to bi-annual or more frequent inspections

Car Washes/Vehicle Maintenance Facilities/Commercial Laundries

- No annual permit requirement
- Facilities must be kept in proper working condition at all times
- Grit/lint trap (if present) must be pumped annually (365 days) by a permitted Liquid Waste Transporter
- All records (i.e. manifests, maintenance logs) must be kept on site for 5yrs
- Must meet local limits for all parameters especially pH and Oil & Grease
 - Majority of facilities have limits for pH 5-12 and Oil & Grease less than 250mg/L
- Must notify Pretreatment/Grease Abatement of any spills or overflows
- Grit traps/interceptors and all associated components (i.e. floor drains, clean out caps) must be in good operational condition

Additional Resources

Additional information with links to permit application and Guidance document can be found here: <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/wastewater/grease-traps>

Current list of permitted Liquid Waste Transporters (updated annually) can be found here: <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/wastewater/liquidwaste-transporters>

Contact information: 817-392-8305, 817-392-5809 or pretreatment@fortworthtexas.gov

Fort Worth's Industrial Pretreatment Program

The EPA's National Pretreatment Program is designed to protect the infrastructure for public sanitary sewer systems and to reduce pollutant levels discharged by industries and businesses into public sanitary sewer systems and into the environment. This is accomplished by approved state and/or local programs to perform permitting, administration, and enforcement tasks for discharges into the municipalities' publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) that treat the water from the sanitary sewers.

Municipalities develop ordinances; issue permits to significant industrial users (SIU); conduct inspections and sampling events; set permit application and semi-annual reporting requirements; evaluate compliance of industrial users and take enforcement action when needed. Annual reporting of the yearly activities to the federal and state agencies is a requirement for the program. Refer to the resources below for more information about this program.

Additional Resources

Additional Information can be found on the City’s Internet Website at:

[Industrial and Commercial Wastewater Requirements – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](http://fortworthtexas.gov)

Applicable City Code:

[CHAPTER 12.5: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND COMPLIANCE \(amlegal.com\)](http://amlegal.com)

Federal Pretreatment regulations- 40 CFR 403

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-N/part-403?toc=1>

Contact

Phone

[817-392-8305](tel:817-392-8305)

Fax

817-392-8566

Email

Pretreatment@FortWorthTexas.gov

Fire Inspection Annual Requirements

The Fort Worth Fire Department serves one of the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan areas by offering a wide range of services, including emergency preparedness, education, prevention, and response. The department also ensures compliance with the Fire Code to promote fire safety. To meet this goal, the Fire Department conducts Fire Inspections, often up to once a year, with small businesses typically inspected by their local fire station.

Scheduling

Scheduling inspections can be challenging for local fire stations due to potential emergency calls. Generally, they will conduct walk-in inspections and ask the business owner if an inspection can be performed immediately. If not, they will work with the owner to set up an appointment. The checklist below outlines what will typically be inspected at your business.

Inspections

The time required to complete an inspection depends on:

- Fire protection system
- Building size
- Occupancy type
- Updated contact information

It is crucial for the Fire Department to have the most current contact information for your business. Your inspection will include updating the following information as applicable:

Business Name Mailing address Phone number	Business Manager name Phone number Email address	Assistant Business Manager name Phone number Email address
Property Owner name Mailing address Phone number Email address	Regional Manager name Mailing address Phone number Email address	Maintenance Supervisor name Phone number Email address

A business owner is not required to be present during an inspection, but a property representative should be available to answer questions.

Key Fire Code items include:

- Current inspection tags on all fire extinguishers
- Current acceptable blue tag on the Fire Alarm Control Panel, if installed
- Current acceptable blue tag on the fire riser/sprinkler system
- Clear paths to and proper operation of exit doors
- Properly functioning emergency lights and exit signs
- Certificate of Occupancy posted in a visible location
- Reference IFC 2021 and Amendments

<https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/fire/services/bureau>

Inspection Outcomes

The business owner will receive a paper or digital copy of the Inspection Checklist, detailing what items were inspected and what passed or failed. If the inspection is done through the City's permitting system, an email will automatically be sent to the property representative on file, typically the owner, indicating whether the inspection passed or failed and including the checklist.

Business owners are given two weeks to comply with any failed items. Immediate compliance is required for life safety hazards, such as a blocked exit. If non-compliance persists after two weeks, a Notice to Comply is issued, allowing an additional week for compliance. A re-inspection is then scheduled on a known date. Failure to pass the re-inspection results in a citation.

The Fire Department will only shut down a business when life safety is clearly compromised with no alternative solutions available. Tools like a *Fire Watch* may allow the business to remain open while addressing deficiencies. If a business is shut down, the owner will be notified when the building is safe to occupy, typically through a face-to-face meeting with the Fire Marshal and a follow-up official email or Inspection Report.

Additional Resources

Contact Information

General Inquiry: 817-392-6800 or 6840

Email: firemarshalqa@fortworthtexas.gov

Send a message via the "Contact the Fire Department" link: [Request a Fire Department service](#)

Fort Worth Fire Department Inspection Checklist: [fire-safety-checklist-for-voluntary-self-inspections.pdf \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](#)

[Q&A for Bureau of Fire Prevention](#)