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DEP Launches New Online Permitting Process for Plumbers

Electronic Process Means Easier Submissions, Quicker Approvals, and Improved Tracking Of Water and Sewer Permits; Fulfills Customer Service Initiative in DEP's Strategic Plan

Environmental Protection Commissioner Cas Holloway today announced the launch of a new online permitting tool for plumbers doing water and sewer repairs and replacements on private property. Previously, plumbers would have to go to at least one DEP facility to obtain a permit to perform work on water and sewer service lines of private homes and businesses. The new online process will allow licensed master plumbers to submit and obtain permits online, streamlining their work and saving them multiple visits to city agency offices. Not only will the new system simplify customer interactions with DEP for plumbers who seek permits on behalf of homeowners, developers, and business owners, it will also allow plumbers to track their permitting history with DEP and better manage their active work. In 2010, DEP issued about 6,000 permits for repairs and replacements. Plumbers interested in taking advantage of the new online system can access it at www.nyc.gov/dep.

"Making it easier to do business in New York City is a key goal of NYC Simplicity," said Deputy Mayor for Operations Stephen Goldsmith. "By streamlining the regulatory requirements for licensed plumbers, DEP has made an important contribution to our citywide reform efforts."

"Improving business interactions with the city and simplifying the permitting process are top priorities for Mayor Bloomberg," said Commissioner Holloway. "Now, plumbers can save the time and hassle of coming to a DEP office — or paying someone to come for them — and more time helping the city to grow and thrive. Online permitting will eliminate substantial transaction costs for plumbers, homeowners, and developers, and improve DEP's ability to oversee the permitting process by increasing our ability to track work going on throughout the city. Like the recently announced Leak Notification Program, this is an example of using technology to improve customer service — a major component of our strategic plan."

MORE INFORMATION

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"We are excited as the Department rolls out their electronic filing initiative and optimistically await its evolution to many other permit activities affecting our membership and their interaction with the Department," said Janene Meyerowitz, Executive Director of the Master Plumbers Council. "The membership of our Association appreciates the efforts of the Department to streamline the permit process, and look forward to additional enhancements. We also take this opportunity to emphasize our Associations' commitment to continuing our participation with the Department, sharing our expertise, assisting with training programs, and other cooperative programs with the same common goals of protecting the water supply system of the City of New York."

"The Plumbing Foundation is pleased that the DEP is moving forward with the process of allowing licensed master plumbers to obtain permits online (if only for limited services at this time) with its Water and Sewer Online Permitting System," said Terence O'Brien, Deputy Director of The Plumbing Foundation City of New York. "We think that utilizing technology benefits both the DEP and all the New York City licensed master plumbers. We applaud DEP for its forward thinking and look forward to our continued strong relationship with the agency."

DEP issues approximately 76,000 total permits, certifications and registrations each year, including ones for plumbing, boilers, asbestos work and demolition. To improve interactions with the professional communities like plumbers, engineers, construction companies, and developers that rely on DEP for their work, DEP is restructuring and improving customer service by simplifying permitting, clarifying requirements and regulations, and increasing outreach. In 2010, of the more than 16,000 water and sewer system permits that DEP issued, about 6,000 of them are for repairs and replacements. The majority of the rest of the permits were for new service line connections. Property owners in New York City are responsible for maintaining their own water service and sewer service lines, which run from inside the property to the water main or city sewer in the street.

Only master plumbers licensed by the New York City Department of Buildings are permitted to perform sub-surface work and repair service lines. The four online applications in the Water and Sewer Permitting System are In-kind Repair of Water Service Line Connections, In-kind Repair of Sewer Service Line Connections, In-kind Relay of Water Service Line Connections, and In-kind Relay of Sewer Service Line Connections. To use the system, licensed master plumbers must first register in person with DEP. Registration includes completing an authentication form that is sealed by the licensed master plumber and signed by a Notary Public, and requires having an email account.

The Water and Sewer Permitting System enables applicants to submit electronic permit applications and receive electronic permits. Permit applications submitted via the new permitting system will result in a work permit that can be downloaded and printed. Applicants are also able to monitor and manage their permit applications conveniently after logging onto the website. The system also provides instantaneous notice by e-mail to applicants about the status of the permit application, that it has been filed, and that the review has been completed by DEP.

The new system will save plumbers the cost of travelling to and from the borough offices and reduce the time waiting for approvals. Previously, a plumber had to visit the

Records/Permitting Borough office in the borough which the work was to be completed to get the application for the work approved by DEP. If approved, the plumber then went to the Customer Service Borough office, which is co-located in the same building only in the Bronx and in Brooklyn. After a review of account information and accuracy, a permit was printed and given to the plumber. A plumber doing work around the city needed to make multiple trips to different boroughs and to two different DEP offices within each borough. Additionally, if a plumber needed another copy of the permit, it required returning to the borough office to get a duplicate printed out. The new online permitting eliminates the multiple trips to different boroughs and to different DEP offices to get the permit, and to get any copies, if needed. Plumbers will still have the option to visit borough offices if they choose not to use the online application.

The new process is one of the goals outlined in *Strategy 2011-2014*, a far-reaching strategic plan that lays out 100 distinct initiatives to make DEP the safest, most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent water utility in the nation. The new plan, the product of nearly one year of analysis and outreach, builds on *PlaNYC*, Mayor Bloomberg's sustainability blueprint for New York City. The plan is available on DEP's website at www.nyc.gov/dep.

DEP manages the city's water supply, providing more than 1 billion gallons of water each day to more than nine million residents, including eight million in New York City and residents of Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties. New York City's water is delivered from a watershed that extends more than 125 miles from the city, and comprises 19 reservoirs, and three controlled lakes. Approximately 7,000 miles of water mains, tunnels and aqueducts bring water to homes and businesses throughout the five boroughs, and 7,400 miles of sewer lines take wastewater to 14 in-city treatment plants. Approximately 1,000 DEP employees live and work in the watershed communities. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/dep or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nycwater.

Related Documents and Links

- ▶ [Water and Sewer Forms Online Permitting System](#)
- ▶ [DEP Strategic Plan - Strategy 2011-2014](#)

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