



THE GOVERNOR JOHN ENGLER

**CENTER FOR
CHARTER SCHOOLS**

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT CHECKLIST

A resource for navigating the Bureau of Construction Codes and Bureau of Fire Services

A critical component of a school's mission and vision is rooted in its location and the population of students it serves; therefore, identifying a facility in the desired location is key. Once the facility is identified, the school begins the process of securing occupancy approval for the facility. This process is repeated when existing schools grow and determine they have a need to expand or renovate. Navigating this process can be difficult and time consuming; occupancy approval must first be obtained prior to any use of new or renovated space since it signifies that the project has been completed in accordance with applicable code and law and demonstrates that the facility is deemed safe for use.

The selection of a qualified project manager could be the most significant decision a school makes as it begins a construction project. A school should seek a project manager with significant experience in construction projects specific to charter public schools in Michigan. Knowledge of the charter public school construction process in Michigan, which may differ from the process that some traditional public schools undergo due to approval of the delegation of enforcement to local building officials, often means the difference between securing occupancy approval before the first day of school or needing to develop and implement a contingency plan because occupancy approval wasn't issued on-time.

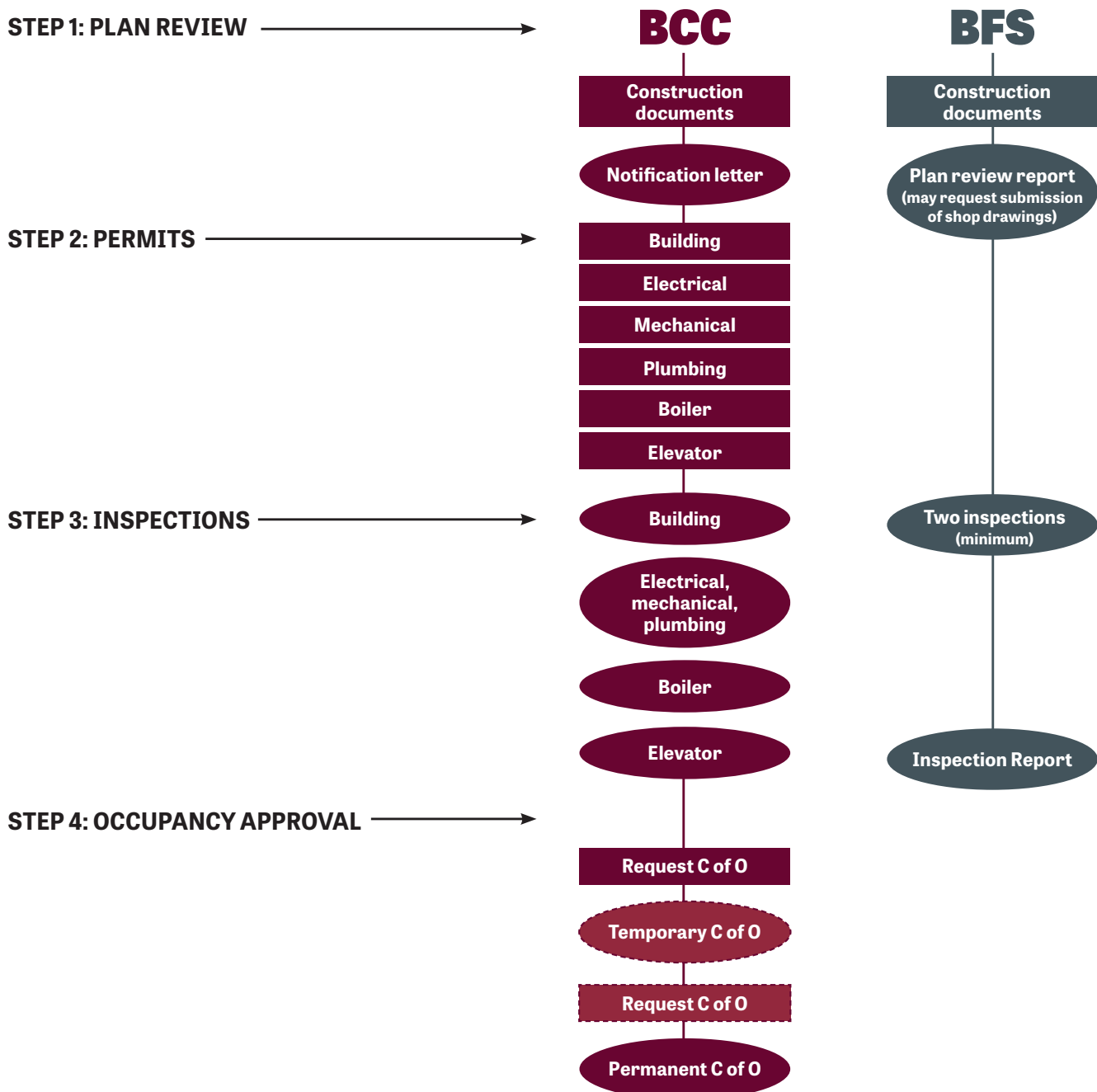
Our office, in collaboration with the Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) and Bureau of Fire Services (BFS), is providing the information on the following pages in an effort to assist schools in successfully (and timely) securing occupancy approval for its charter public school facility.

CONTACT INFORMATION ASSOCIATED TIMELINES

School construction projects are any projects involving new construction, a facility expansion, addition of modular units or renovation or repair of an existing facility. Act 628 of the Public Acts of 2002 (1937 PA 306), signed into law on December 23, 2002, requires the inspection of all school facilities and the review of all school construction documents (this law revised the School Building Act, PA 306 of 1937).

All school construction projects are required to comply with the requirements outlined in the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act and the Fire Prevention Code. To that end, construction documents for any of these types of projects must be submitted to the BCC and the BFS for review and approval prior to obtaining permits and onsite inspections.

The BCC and BFS, two distinct entities within the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (DLARA), serve critical roles in school facility construction and approval of both bureaus is required to obtain occupancy approval.



STEP 1: PLAN REVIEW

The Plan Review Division is the first unit at both the BCC and BFS with which the school will have contact. The Plan Review Division's responsibility at both bureaus is to review all construction documents associated with a particular facility project to ensure compliance with all code requirements. Schools can submit construction plans electronically online through a platform that allows the BCC, the BFS and other agencies involved in the review access to the documents. This platform eliminates the time consuming and cumbersome back and forth of sending paper plans through the mail. One set of construction documents and site plans can be electronically submitted, reviewed, marked up, revised and approved by multiple DLARA bureaus that may be involved in the building project. Applicants are able to make corrections and resubmit electronically, as well as check the status of their applications at any time of the day or night. The link to the online submission system is located at: aca-prod.accela.com/LARA/.

BCC

The school must submit the applicable construction documents to the BCC using the online submission system referenced above or the Application for School Project and Plan Examination form. (Link to Application for School Project and Plan Examination form: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/bcc940_app_for_school_building_projects_and_plan_examination_1217-fillable_612607_7.pdf.) **The construction documents must be sealed and signed by an architect or professional engineer in accordance with 1980 PA 299 as amended.** A complete set of construction documents must be submitted for review and approval for:

- existing buildings that are operating under a Certificate of Use and Occupancy (C of O) that is for non-educational use;
- the construction of a new facility;
- the installation of modular units; or
- the expansion or renovation of its current facility, including the installation of temporary partitions.

For projects that involve a site plan review, the school is responsible for any environmental approvals required for the site. Generally, if the project involves activities outside of the facility (i.e. driveways, wetlands, flood zone), the school is required to consult with local authorities to determine if local approval is required. In situations where the local authorities do not require review of the project, the school needs to document the conversation, including the date. If local review and approval is deemed necessary, the school should obtain documentation supporting the approval.

The Plan Review Division then reviews the construction documents against the applicable code(s). Upon completion, the school will receive notification from the Plan Review Division, generally in the form of a letter. This letter will either give approval of the submitted documents or delineate any areas of non-compliance and request additional documentation.

BFS

The school must submit the construction documents to the BFS using the online submission system referenced above. As of October 1, 2023, the BFS no longer accepts paper plans. **The construction documents must be signed and sealed by an architect or professional engineer licensed in the state of Michigan.** Construction documents must be submitted for review and approval for:

- existing buildings that are operating under a C of O that is for non-educational use;
- the construction of a new facility;
- the installation of modular units; or
- the expansion or renovation of its current facility, including the installation of temporary partitions.

If the entity occupying the facility changes (i.e. ABC School moves out; XYZ school moves in), the new entity must apply for a [School Fire Safety Inspection](#), even if there has not been a gap in occupancy of the facility. Please note: Any building previously used as a K-12 school that has changed use from a K-12 school to any other use and now wishes to go back to a K-12 use will not qualify for a School Fire Safety Inspection and must be reviewed and inspected as a new K-12 school in accordance with PA 628 and PA 207. Additionally, a previously approved school building which has undergone any unapproved construction or remodeling may not qualify for a School Fire Safety Inspection. If the building qualifies for a School Fire Safety Inspection, the BFS will send a confirmation email to the applicant.

After the BFS reviews the construction documents, a plan review report will be issued and may require additional documentation to be submitted including, but not limited to, shop drawings for fire alarm and fire suppression systems. Please note, without shop drawings the inspector will be unable to schedule the final inspection.

The BFS created a Plan Review Checklist to assist in navigating its process. (Link to Plan Review Checklist: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/PR_Checklist_Rev_8-13-15_497185_7.pdf.)

STEP 2: PERMITS

Permits are only obtained from the BCC – not the BFS. Upon receiving approval of the construction documents, the school is ready to apply for the necessary permits. The number and type of permits will depend on the scope of the project and will differ from one project to another. The various types of permits and links to the permit applications are listed below. Only individuals licensed by the State of Michigan in the appropriate discipline(s) may apply for permits. The school is also able to apply for permits using the online system located at: aca-prod.accela.com/LARA/.

Building Permit

Prior to the construction, expansion or renovation of a facility or the installation of modular units, an application for a building permit must be filed with the BCC. The school must have received approval from the BCC's Plan Review Division for its proposed project before a building permit can be issued. The school can apply for a permit using the online system referenced previously or by using the Building Permit Application at: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/bcc324_building_permit_application_0518-fillable_622957_7.pdf.

Electrical Permit

Prior to equipping a facility with electrical conductors or equipment, or to make alterations to existing electrical conductors or equipment, an application for an electrical permit must be filed with the BCC. The school must have received approval from the BCC's Plan Review Division for its proposed project before an electrical permit can be issued. The school can apply for a permit using the online system referenced previously or by using the Electrical Permit Application located at: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara_bcc_339_electrical_permit_application_1016_537600_7.pdf.

Mechanical Permit

Prior to initiating any changes to a facility's mechanical equipment or systems, with the exception of the replacement of minor parts, an application for a mechanical permit must be filed with the BCC. The school must have received approval from the BCC's Plan Review Division for its proposed project before a mechanical permit can be issued. The school can apply for a permit using the online system referenced previously or by using the Mechanical Permit Application located at: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara_bcc_9_mechanical_permit_application_1016_537615_7.pdf.

Plumbing Permit

Prior to initiating any changes to a facility's plumbing equipment or systems, an application for a plumbing permit must be filed with the BCC. The only exception to this is repairs involving only the working parts of a faucet or valve or clearance of stoppages provided alterations are not made in the existing piping or fixtures. The school must have received approval from the BCC's Plan Review Division for its proposed project before a plumbing permit can be issued. The school can apply for a permit using the online system referenced previously or by using the Plumbing Permit Application located at: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara_bcc_327_plumbing_permit_application_1016_537607_7.pdf.

Boiler Permit

Prior to installing, altering or repairing a boiler or its piping, a boiler permit must be issued by the BCC. The school can apply for a permit using the online system or by using the Boiler Permit Application located at: www.michigan.gov/documents/dleg/dleg_bcc_boiler_permit_application_261673_7.pdf. The permit application must be submitted in triplicate with detailed plans and specifications for review by the Boiler unit.

Elevator Permit

Prior to installing or altering an elevator or other elevating device, the school is required to submit detailed plans and specifications in triplicate. The installation permit application must be approved before a permit is issued. The various elevator permit applications are located at: www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara_bcc_elevator_permits_530901_7.pdf.

STEP 3: INSPECTIONS

Inspections are necessary in order to show compliance with all applicable codes, the approved construction documents and all other required laws. The school should call for inspections when construction work has begun. The number of inspections for each permit varies as indicated below:

BCC

Building Inspections

A minimum of five inspections, listed below, are required for most facilities. **It is the permit holder's responsibility to call and schedule inspections.** The phone number of the building inspector will be included on the building permit when issued.

- Foundation Inspection** – the inspection should take place prior to placing concrete in piers, trenches and formwork.
- Backfill Inspection** – the inspection should take place prior to backfill and after the footings, walls, waterproofing and drain tile are installed.
- Rough Inspection** – the inspection should take place after the roof, all framing, firestopping, bracing and the electrical rough, mechanical rough and plumbing rough installations have been approved and before the insulation is installed.
- Insulation Inspection** – the inspection should take place after all insulation has been installed and before any finish work is installed.
- Final Inspection** – the inspection should take place upon completion of the facility and before occupancy occurs.

Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Inspections

A minimum of two inspections, rough and final, are required for most projects that include electrical, mechanical or plumbing work. No work shall be concealed until it has been inspected. **It is the permit**

holder's responsibility to call and schedule inspections. The phone number of the inspector will be included on the corresponding permit when issued.

Boiler Inspections

It is the permit holder's responsibility to call and schedule inspections. The inspector's phone number is included on the permit when issued. The inspection certificate will not be issued until electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits have had a final inspection approval.

Elevator Inspections

To schedule an elevator inspection, the school should contact the Elevator Safety Division at (517) 241-9337.

BFS

A minimum of two inspections are required, preliminary and final and **it is the school's responsibility to request both.** Directions related to the scheduling of inspections are contained on the plan review report issued by the BFS to the school.

STEP 4: OCCUPANCY APPROVAL

In order to occupy the facility, the school must obtain a C of O from the BCC. A Temporary C of O may be issued in lieu of a Permanent C of O.

BCC

Requesting a C of O

After the school has received the final approval for each of the applicable permits, only the building permit holder may request a C of O from the BCC's Building Division. The school may request the C of O using the [online system](#) or the [Certificate of Occupancy Request Form](#). A C of O will not be issued until all fees are paid, permits have final approvals and the information on the C of O request form is complete.

Temporary C of O

When a Temporary C of O is issued it is for a set amount of days and includes an expiration date. In order to continue occupying the space after the expiration date, the school must first obtain another Temporary C of O or a Permanent C of O. **The BCC does not automatically issue another C of O once the expiration date arrives. It is the responsibility of the school to request another C of O.**

Permanent C of O

Upon completion and finalization of all inspections a Permanent C of O will be issued. In some cases a school may receive several Temporary C of Os before the Permanent C of O is secured.

A "verbal" approval is not recognized by the BCC, BFS or the Center and should not be considered valid by the school. The school is required to submit to the Center a copy of the C of O prior to occupancy. A school that uses a facility without first obtaining a C of O and submitting a copy to the Center is in violation of the charter contract and all applicable law. The school will be required to immediately remove students from the unapproved space. Failure to do so could result in a Notice of Intent to Revoke the charter contract.

ASSOCIATED TIMELINES

It is critically important that the school's planning and construction timeline allow for sufficient time (and delays) surrounding inspections by the BCC and the BFS. Questions regarding current legislation, school construction or requirements under the State Construction Code for school projects should be directed to the BCC at (517) 241-9317 and the BFS at (517) 241-8847.

BCC and BFS Timeline

Below is a suggested timeline for consideration related to the submission of site/facility related materials to the state's BCC. This timeline assumes an occupancy date of the first Tuesday after Labor Day and a ground-breaking date in the preceding spring:

February 15	Site Plan and Construction Code Reviews: submit the Application for School Project Plan Examination form and all related materials.
April 12	Permit Application(s): materials submitted to the BCC.
July 15	Inspection(s): final inspections should be scheduled to take place on or before.
August	Certificate of Use and Occupancy requests: materials submitted to the BCC.

In general, anything involving a BCC Plan Review takes a minimum of three weeks however, it could take as long as 10 weeks. An additional three weeks should be incorporated into the timeline in the event the school is required to resubmit documents, which is a common occurrence. Also, it is highly recommended that the school include an adequate contingency allowance (two weeks or more). In all, the school should set aside a total of 15 weeks for plan review.

Below is a suggested timeline for consideration related to the submission of site/facility related materials to the state's BFS. This timeline also assumes an occupancy date of the first Tuesday after Labor Day and a ground-breaking date in the preceding spring:

February 15	Submit Application for Fire Safety Plan Examination form and all related materials.
March 25	Shop drawings (e.g. fire alarm, sprinkler, etc.) sent to BFS; Form BFS979; potential 3-4 week lead time to receive comments back.
May 3	Architect requests 50% inspection; potential 3-4 week lead time to schedule inspection.
July 15	Architect requests final inspection; potential 3-4 week lead time to schedule inspection.
August 12	Final approved Fire Marshal Inspection Report issued by the BFS to the architect/owner.

This is a generic timeline with the potential for variation depending on the specific job. It is critical that the architect and general contractor ensure that the contractors for the fire alarm, sprinkler, etc., submit their shop drawings in a timely manner.

CONTACT INFORMATION

BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION CODES

Phone Number

Plan Review and Building Divisions: (517) 241-9313

Mail

U.S. Postal Service with Payment:

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

Bureau of Construction Codes

<Insert Name of Division>

P.O. Box 30255

Lansing, MI 48909

Carrier Other Than U.S. Postal Service (i.e. UPS, FedEx, DHL):

Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs

Bureau of Construction Codes

<Insert Division Name>

2407 N. Grand River Avenue

Lansing, MI 48906

BUREAU OF FIRE SERVICES

Phone Number

Fire Safety Plan Review Division: (517) 241-8847

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