



How to apply for a planning permit

Fact Sheet

A planning permit is often the first and most important permit when starting or expanding a business, as it's a 'make or break' decision. Applying for a planning permit is done on your local council website.

Before you begin

Before you apply, you may wish to have a pre-application meeting with your local Council. They can advise:

- Whether or not your proposal actually needs a permit.
- If your proposal is prohibited.
- What additional information you need to supply with your application.
- How your application will be processed.
- Whether your application is eligible for VicSmart, a simplified application process.

What sort of permit am I applying for?

A planning permit may be required for multiple reasons, known as 'permit triggers', or just one, depending on the proposal. For example, you may need a permit to change the use of a building, or to construct or modify a building.

Here are the common 'permit triggers' associated with small business applications:

- **Change of use** - when you want to operate a business that uses the land for a different reason to its current or previous use, e.g. operate a shop in what was previously a warehouse. Planning permit for liquor also fall into the 'change of use' category.
- **Buildings and works** - when you want to change the building or excavate land.
- **Advertising signs** - e.g. business signage.
- **Reduction in car parking** - there are guidelines for how many car parking spaces you need, so you'll need to make a case for an exemption if you don't meet these.

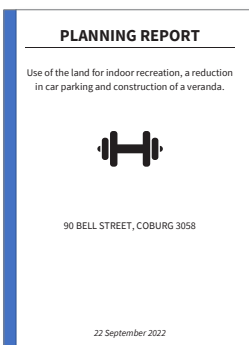




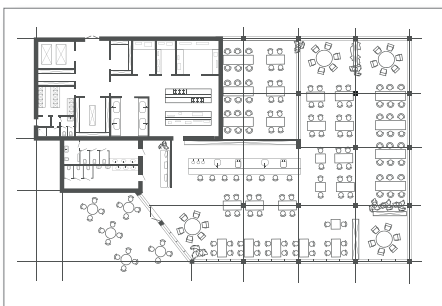
Certificate of Title



Application form



Planning report



Site and elevation plans

What information do I need for my application?

You will need to submit the following information online during your application:

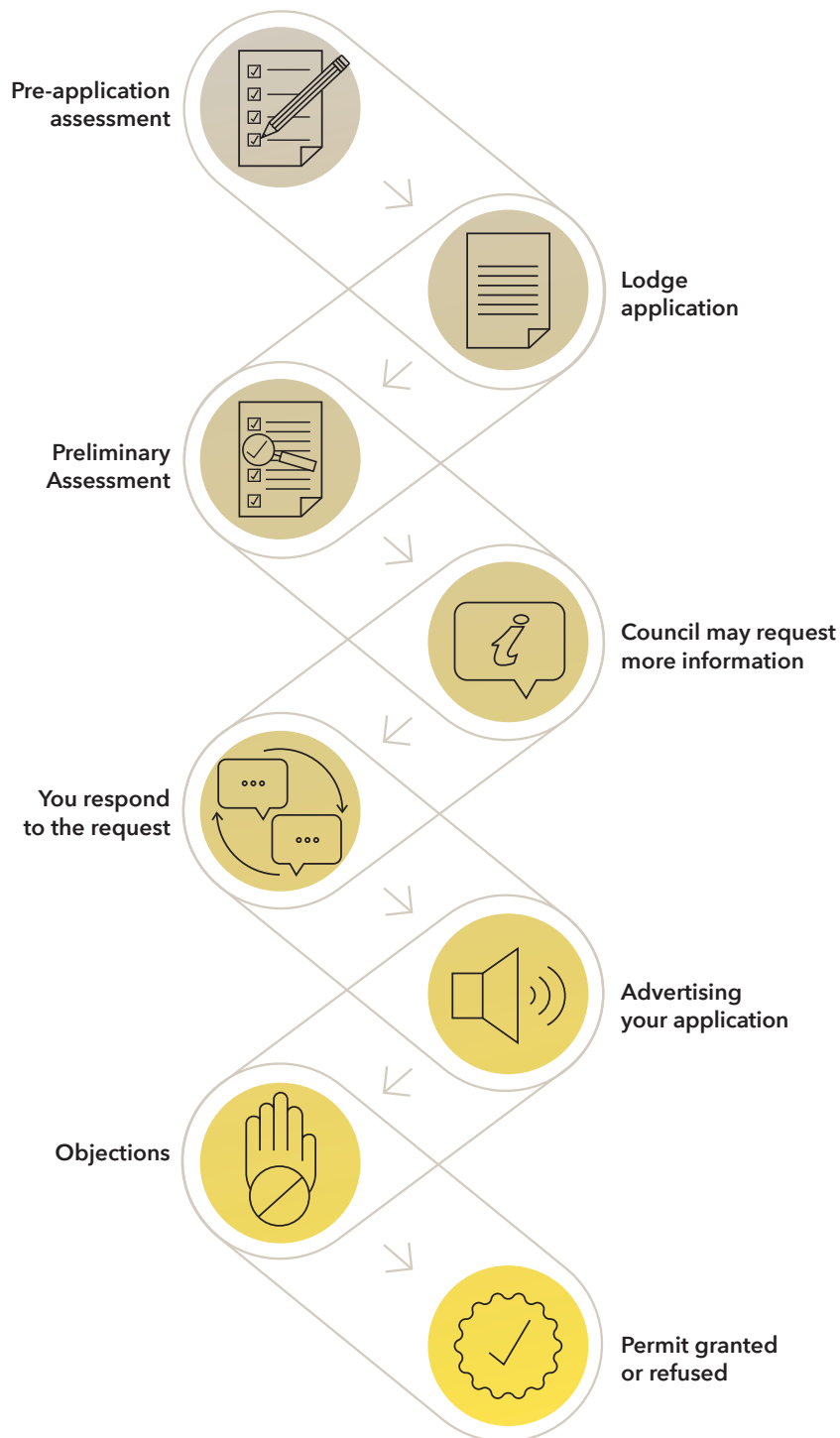
- **Application form** – this is on your local Council’s website. Note: if you are not the owner of the land you need to declare that the owner has been notified.
- **Certificate of Title** – not less than 3 months old. This can be purchased from Landata Vic. Go to <https://www.landata.vic.gov.au> and select Title and Property Information, then select Register Search Statement (Copy of Title).
- **Planning fee** – the amount will be shown on the Council website
- **Written submission or planning report** – this should explain your proposal and provide details about your business, like the proposed number of employees, hours of operation, patron capacity (by square metres or seating) and car parking. It assesses the proposal against relevant planning policies and requirements and justifies why a permit should be granted. You may wish to consider engaging a planning consultant to help prepare the planning report, especially if the proposal is complex.
- **Expert reports** – these are technical reports that Council may require to form a decision. For example, cumulative amenity impact report, acoustic report or car parking/traffic assessment.
- **Site and elevation plans** – these should be prepared by a suitably qualified architect or draftsman, and drawn to scale. They should also clearly depict:
 - o Any existing and new buildings.
 - o Finished floor levels.
 - o Site levels.
 - o Setbacks from all boundaries.
 - o Wall and overall building heights taken from natural ground level at the building line as well at the boundary line.
 - o Car parking and accessway design.
 - o Proposed earthworks/areas of cut and fill along with retaining walls.

How do I apply?

Planning permit applications are all done online, through your local council website. If you’re unsure which council is responsible for your property, visit [knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils](https://www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils)

Application process

The steps involved in applying for a planning permit can vary depending on whether more information is required or there are objections to your application. Unless you're using VicSmart, which is for straightforward applications, the steps are:



As a general rule of thumb, allow a few months to gain planning approval - but contact your Council to find out what their current timeframes are like.

Find out more

For more information about the application process, refer to the Council Guidelines for your business, e.g. *Council Guidelines for Hospitality Businesses*.