



# Permits and Inspection Readiness

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*In order to operate an auto shop, certain local, state, and federal permits and licenses are required. Some of these are based on the activities and services performed within your shop, and some are potential local requirements that must be adhered to by any business wishing to operate in your chosen city or town. Outlined here are some ideas that have been gathered from other shops that may help your shop prepare for inspections.*

## Types of Permits

### General information

Some permits are required by state and federal environmental regulations. However, the more basic permits are usually administered by your city or town Building Department, Public Works Department, Inspectional Services Department, or Fire Department. If your shop is in a small town, be sure to check with the relevant departments to find out the local requirements and authorities. There are also online services that can help your shop organize the various permits and registrations that are needed for a fee. If your shop has questions about which permits and licenses apply to the work you do, you can contact the MA Office of Technical Assistance at (617) 626-1060 for free, confidential assistance.

### Business registration

Your business must register with your city or town.

### Motor vehicle repair shop license (RS#)

Your shop needs this in order to operate. You must register with the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation. [Get the application.](#)

### Surety bond

A surety bond or letter of credit in the amount of \$10,000 is required to obtain a Motor Vehicle Repair Shop License.

### Worker's compensation policy

All employers in Massachusetts are required to carry workers' compensation insurance covering their employees, including themselves if they are an employee of their company. You can contact an insurance company to set this up. [Learn more about workers' compensation in Massachusetts.](#)

### Appraiser's license

Information about training and exams for this licensing can be found on the [here.](#)

### Occupancy permit

Businesses must have an occupancy permit from your city or town enforcement agency. Check with them to find out what other permits may be required to legally operate your business. It should be posted near the entrance. Your shop can check your city or town requirements.

### **Indoor vehicle storage permit**

Otherwise known as a “Garage” permit, this allows your shop to store vehicles inside. Your shop may be required to obtain this from your city or town.

### **Use of premises permit**

If your shop needs to store some vehicles in an outdoor area near the shop, you may also need this permit. You can check with your city or town. As an example, [view the use of premises permit application for Boston](#).

### **Flammable storage permit**

This may usually be obtained through the fire department and is required for your shop to store flammable liquids. More information about the storage of flammable liquids can be found on the “Understanding OSHA Requirements for Auto Shops” fact sheet. As an example, [view the flammable storage garage license application for Boston](#).

### **Hazardous waste registration**

Your shop needs to identify its hazardous wastes, [register with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection \(MassDEP\)](#), and keep its Generator ID and registration readily available. See “Hazardous Waste Management fact sheet.”

### **Underground or above-ground storage tank permit**

[Find directions for online filing for underground storage tank permits](#), required by MassDEP.

[Find forms for above-ground storage tank construction or annual renewal inspection](#), required by MassDEP.

### **Cutting torch permit and oxygen, acetylene storage permit**

These are two separate permits that are relevant if your shop performs welding. They can be obtained from your city or town’s fire department. See the Safe “Welding Practices” fact sheet.

### **Towing license**

You can check with your city or town for any licenses needed for towing.

### **EPA’s NESHAP 6H notification**

Contact your paint manufacturer to request a list of paints that are regulated by [US EPA’s NESHAP 6H regulation](#). If you do use regulated coatings, you must notify the US EPA. [View an example initial notification](#).

### **Air permit**

The EPA requires that auto body shops need a spray booth. MassDEP requires that spray booth operators have an air permit that is based on the VOCs emitted. [Find the operating permit and reporting forms](#).

You may be exempt from the MassDEP air permit if your coating and solvent use is below the threshold listed in [OTA’s spray booth factsheet](#). Contact Marina Gayl at [Marina.Gayl@Mass.Gov](mailto:Marina.Gayl@Mass.Gov) or (617) 626-1077 at OTA if you need assistance in calculating your coating and solvent use, or any other issues.

### **Owner/ Operator Certification for Painter Training**

The EPA NESHAP 6H regulations require documented training for paint technicians and spray booth operators. [Find an example of the training documentation](#). Specifically, the regulation requires:

“Hands-on and classroom instruction that addresses, at a minimum, initial and refresher training in the topics listed in paragraphs (f)(2)(i) through (2)(iv) of this section.

- Spray gun equipment selection, set up, and operation, including measuring coating viscosity, selecting the proper fluid tip or nozzle, and achieving the proper spray pattern, air pressure and volume, and fluid delivery rate.
- Spray technique for different types of coatings to improve transfer efficiency and minimize coating usage and overspray, including maintaining the correct spray gun distance and angle to the part, using proper banding and overlap, and reducing lead and lag spraying at the beginning and end of each stroke.
- Routine spray booth and filter maintenance, including filter selection and installation.
- Environmental compliance with the requirements of this subpart.”

## **Inspection Readiness**

To be prepared for inspections, read through the checklist and attend to the items that need still need action. Having an organized shop, where employees know where important and current documents are kept, will help with the ease of inspections. Have a “book” or binder with key documents and information readily available to present to an inspector. See these examples of documents to be included:

- Permits and licenses
- Tax ID number
- Hazardous waste record keeping (storage, transportation logs) – these can be the most recent records, while older records can be stored in another binder or in your shop’s computer system.
- Contingency plans for fire prevention, emergencies, and spill control.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for all products. Your supplier or manufacturer must supply you with the SDS for each product used in your shop. Because SDSs may take up a lot of space, it may be easier to keep these in a separate location or binder that is readily accessible to your employees.
- Employee certifications, licenses, training records.
- Documents from previous inspections.
- Spray booth records, if you are a body shop. These include information on filter changes and monthly tallies of all organic materials used (coatings and solvents).

**For free and confidential technical assistance or questions, contact:**  
**MA Office of Technical Assistance 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston MA 02114**  
**Phone: 617.626.1060 Fax: 617.626.1095 E-mail: [maota@mass.gov](mailto:maota@mass.gov)**  
**[www.mass.gov/eea/ota/masscar](http://www.mass.gov/eea/ota/masscar)**