

DON'T FORGET ZONING!

The City of Polson has a growing business community and many areas on busy streets are designated for commercial or industrial uses. These designations are called "zoning districts." The City currently has five specific zoning districts for commercial or industrial activity. Not every commercial zone will allow all types of businesses. For example, the Transitional Zoning District (TZD) does not allow large-scale businesses, but does allow businesses that are residential in appearance and scale.

It is important to check with the land owner or your real estate agent **before** signing a lease or a purchase agreement to verify the property's zoning **and** all applicable zoning performance standards. For example, the parking standard for a restaurant is different than an administrative office. By being diligent, you can ensure a successful beginning to your business venture.

The Planning Department maintains a webpage where you can view the Development Code section by section. The website address is: www.cityofpolson.com/pdf/PDC2016.pdf. The Planning Department also maintains an up-to-date zoning map and can be accessed here: www.cityofpolson.com/pdf/zoningmap2016.pdf. Using gis.mt.gov, you can search for your parcel by owner name, street address, Tax ID or just zoom in on the map to locate the property.

Sites that have existing buildings may or may not be ready for your business. Be sure to check your zoning before committing your time and resources to a location.

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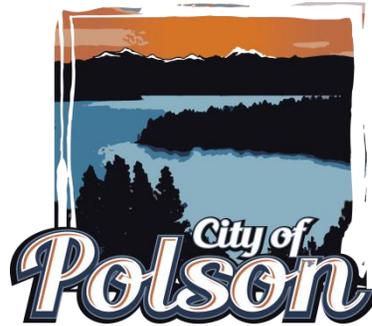
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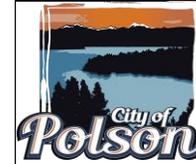


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CITY OF POLSON

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OPERATING A NEW BUSINESS IN POLSON

We are pleased you chose Polson for your business location. This brochure provides important information about operating a business in Polson.

If you have any questions about the material in this brochure, please contact City staff.

We look forward to serving your business needs.

IS IT A “CHANGE OF USE”???

Please be aware that starting a business means more than just getting a business license. To begin, you should determine whether your business creates a “change in use.” A change in use occurs when any portion of the building is used for a purpose other than that which was previously approved by City departments. Do not automatically assume that a previous business was an allowed use.

When a change in use occurs the owner/applicant is responsible for complying with all codes and regulations. This may be simple or complicated depending on a variety of circumstances. There may be any number of departments involved including the Fire, Planning, Engineering, Public Utilities, Building, and Health Departments.

We suggest the following steps:

1. Determine if the building will be changed from its current use. A few examples include a warehouse to a shop, a bakery to a restaurant, an office to a store, or a house to an office.
2. If the prior use was existing, determine if the use was previously approved.
3. If the building use needs to be changed, you may wish to contact a design professional. Some of the items that may need to be addressed include:
 - Zoning, landscaping
 - Parking, drainage, utilities
 - Construction of right of way improvements
 - Structural considerations
 - Occupant loads
 - Fire sprinklers and fire alarms
 - Fire ratings, openings, and penetrations
 - Accessibility

FIRE CODE SAYS:

New and existing businesses are required to be in compliance with the fire code. In addition to change of use or occupancy issues, there are basic fire code provisions that all businesses are required to comply with. The following is a list of some of the fundamental requirements:

Exits

- Exits shall be kept clear and unobstructed.
- Exit doors shall have approved locking device(s) Illuminated exit signs and emergency lighting shall be maintained operable
- Storage is prohibited in exit stairwells

Fire Protection Systems and Fire Resistive Construction

- Fire protection equipment and systems shall be maintained in an operable condition at all times
- Fire extinguishers, fire sprinkler systems, fire standpipe systems, and fire alarm systems shall be inspected and serviced annually (every 12 months)
- Commercial cooking fire extinguishing systems shall be inspected and serviced as required per Chapter 9 of the 2012 International Fire Code
- Fire extinguishers shall be mounted and readily accessible
- Fire resistive construction including fire doors, walls, and barriers shall be maintained
- Self-closing fire and smoke doors shall not be wedged or blocked open

FIRE CODE CONT'D

Housekeeping

- Combustible materials shall not be stored in electrical, mechanical, and boiler rooms
- Combustible materials shall not be stored within 36 inches of a heat source
- Combustible materials and storage shall be kept orderly
- Storage shall be maintained a minimum 18 inches below fire sprinkler heads
- In buildings not equipped with a fire sprinkler system, storage shall be kept 24 inches below the ceiling
- Excessive waste accumulation shall be removed immediately

Electrical

- Exposed electrical wiring and open electrical boxes are not allowed
- Extension cords shall not be used as permanent wiring
- Electrical panels and equipment shall be accessible and kept clear of storage

Miscellaneous

- An occupant load sign shall be posted for assembly occupancies (restaurants, bars, theaters)
- The buildings or suite address shall be posted on the side of the building facing the street on which the building is addressed
- Address numbers shall be visible from the street, a minimum of four inches tall, and shall be contrasting color to their background