



TO: Development Services Customers

SUBJECT: **INFORMATION BULLETIN 104b**
Temporary on Permanent Set (TOPS)
Electrical Permit for **Existing Structures**

DATE: October 14, 2005/*Revised Nov 2013/Aug 2014/Nov 2015/ February 9, 2023*

CREATED BY: Field Services Division

Purpose:

As a customer service initiative, the Development Services Department (DSD) created this revised bulletin to update IB 104b for temporary on permanent set (TOPS) permits for existing structures. This bulletin has been updated to remove a contact, for format, and to provide more information for commercial existing buildings.

Scope:

The TOPS permit on an existing structure is only for the purpose of providing contractors with temporary electrical power for repairs to the structure. The utilization of this type of permit would eliminate the need to build a Temporary Meter Loop (TML) to provide temporary power.

RESIDENTIAL

For any existing residential home (single family, duplex, or townhome three stories or less) where a new meter is required and temporary power is required prior to final CPS release, a standalone TOPS permit would always be applied for. The standalone TOPS permit is a subtype of an Electrical Permit and the application must be applied for online, submitted by a Texas licensed master electrician registered with the City of San Antonio. The TOPS fee and inspections are on the standalone TOPS permit. The standalone TOPS permit belongs to the master electrician and must be linked to the main building permit.

COMMERCIAL

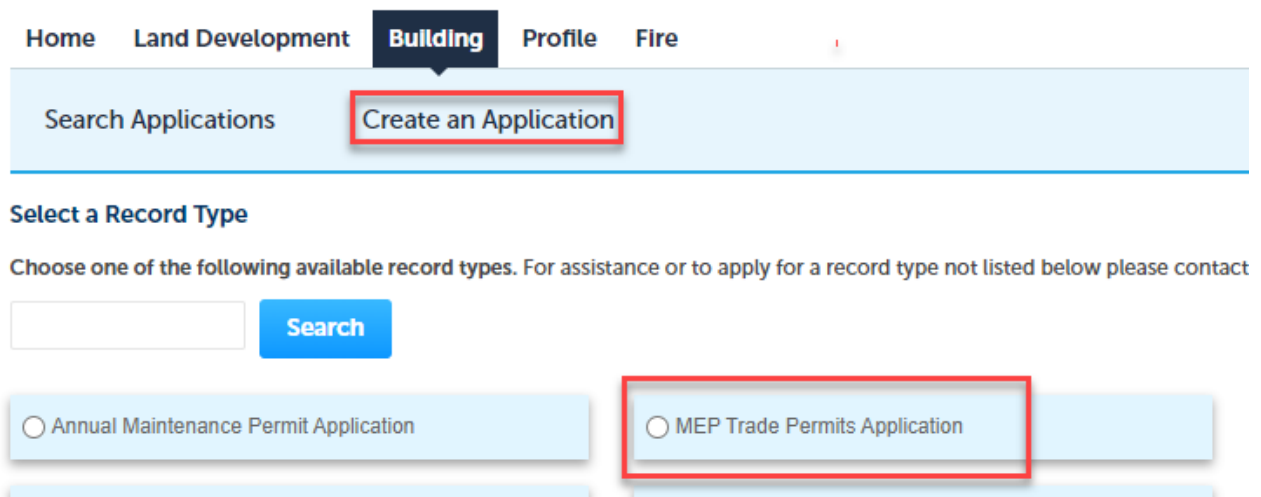
Commercial building permits are generally combination permits meaning that all trade fees and inspections are on the building permit, including the TOPS fee and TOPS inspection. Additional fees and inspections by applying for a separate trade permit is therefore inappropriate, creating duplicate fees, inspections and lost time when trying to obtain a certificate of occupancy. There are two exceptions allowing an application for separate standalone TOPS permits however, they are:

1. One TOPS has already been added to a commercial building permit, however an additional TOPS release to CPS is required. For example, a second CPS meter and TOPS inspection is required for a fire pump and the pump needs to be energized and tested.
2. Some commercial work may only be trade related with no commercial remodel permit. This is often the case where the commercial permit is only a Minor Repair permit. In this case the need for a TOPS release to CPS will require a standalone TOPS permit application.

Never apply for a standalone TOPS permit for a new building being constructed (commercial or residential). These are always combination permits.

APPLICATION

Application for a standalone TOPS permit is through the [BuildSA Accela Customer Portal](#). With your portal account set up, please log in using your password and Create an Application under the Building Tab.



The screenshot shows the BuildSA Accela Customer Portal interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with tabs for 'Home', 'Land Development', 'Building', 'Profile', and 'Fire'. The 'Building' tab is currently selected. Below the navigation menu, there is a light blue bar with two buttons: 'Search Applications' and 'Create an Application'. The 'Create an Application' button is highlighted with a red rectangular box. Below this bar, there is a section titled 'Select a Record Type' with the instruction: 'Choose one of the following available record types. For assistance or to apply for a record type not listed below please contact'. There is a search input field and a blue 'Search' button. Below the search field, there are two radio button options: 'Annual Maintenance Permit Application' and 'MEP Trade Permits Application'. The 'MEP Trade Permits Application' option is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

After entering the address, fill out the General Information. See second screen below.

It is important to answer No to the first question related to a new Residential or new Commercial building permit.

For the question, “Is this related to a residential addition, remodel, accessory bldg or commercial minor repair?”, this is where you would specify either an existing Residential building or a Commercial existing building. For commercial it is possible that there is no commercial permit and the answer would be No. But generally there would be some permit even if only a repair permit. Entering Yes will then prompt you to enter the residential or commercial building permit number.

Is this related to a residential addition, remodel, accessory bldg or commercial minor repair?: * Yes No

Building Permit Number: *

* MEP Trade Permit Type:

This General Information screen is also where you select an Electrical Permit and a sub-type TOPS.

General Information

GENERAL MEP TRADE INFORMATION

* Is this application related to a new residential home or a commercial building permit?: Yes No


Is this related to a residential addition, remodel, accessory bldg or commercial minor repair?: * Yes No

* MEP Trade Permit Type:

If you are requesting a permit for an Electrical Generator, please select Solar – Photovoltaic Permit

Electrical Permit Type: *

Is this for a water softener or reverse osmosis?:

* Work Type: 

Is this related to a Commercial Building permit issued in Hansen before November 30, 2020?: Yes No

* Scope of Work:

The Scope of Work should be filled out with as much detail as possible to help the inspector and DSD know what the TOPS is for (or perhaps why an additional TOPS is needed for commercial).

CPS RELEASE

The approval/authorization to CPS to energize can be given provided the following requirements have been met:

- A licensed electrical contractor registered with the City of San Antonio must be the Licensed Professional for the TOPS permit and the record number linked in the City computer system to the main building permit for the address. A TOPS permit is a separate and additional permit from the main electrical permit.
- The existing electrical service must be in good condition and comply with the City electrical code including all grounding requirements.
- The electrical loads originating from the existing service equipment must be disconnected and safeguarded from accidental energizing.
- Temporary GFCI protected outlets must be provided at the service equipment location for the purposes of providing construction power.

A TOPS permit is not an approval for persons or property to occupy the structure without proper approval. The structure must meet all the necessary City requirements prior to it being occupied by persons or property.

Should you have any questions on this process, please contact the Electrical Inspections Supervisor at (210) 207-8286, or by email to Valerie.Gleason@sanantonio.gov.

Summary:

This Information Bulletin is for informational purposes only.

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