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## Chapter 11

# Health, Safety, and Utility Equipment



Buildings in New York City may be required to accommodate a variety of health, safety, and utility equipment. Some of these installations are mandated by NYC Fire and Building Codes or utility companies. Other safety equipment may not be required by law but is commonly used, like window security bars, security cameras, lighting, and intercom panels. The relatively small and discrete nature of these types of installations, their physical requirements, legal constraints, and their presence throughout the city serve as the basis for LPC's rules for work involving health, safety, and utility equipment installations (see [LPC Rules](#), Section 2-20, available on our website, [www.nyc.gov/landmarks](http://www.nyc.gov/landmarks)).

# In This Chapter, You Will Find:



**This chapter** explains LPC's rules for installing health, safety, and utility equipment. Our goal is to help you submit a fully completed permit application for work that conforms to the rules so you can get your permit more quickly.



**Note:** If your health, safety, and utility work is related to heating, ventilation, or air conditioning equipment (HVAC) and mechanical equipment installations, please refer to *Chapter 12* as well.

<b>Section A</b>	<b>11.3</b>
How to Get Started	
<b>Section B</b>	<b>11.5</b>
LPC Rules and Criteria	
<b>General Criteria</b>	<b>11.6</b>
– Installing Light Fixtures and Intercom Panels	
– Installing Security Cameras	
– Installing Mailboxes and Mail Key Lockboxes	
– Installing Security Gates and Bars	
– Installing Certain Types of HVAC Equipment at the Base of Buildings	
– Installing Detachable Flood Protection Barriers	

# Section A

## How to Get Started



Before applying for your permit, you should:

### Find Information About Your Building

This will help you determine how the LPC Rules apply.

#### What type of building is it?

Search for your building on the **Discover NYC Landmarks map** to determine how the LPC Rules apply to your specific building type.

Click on your building to find **construction date, architect and style, building and landmark type**, and a link to the **LPC designation report** with historical background.

#### What did your building look like?

Find **historic tax photos** from the 1940s and 1980s, available through the NYC Department of Records & Information Services' NYC Municipal Archives Collections.

Additional information, including guidance on finding **historic maps**, can be found in the **LPC Resource Guide** Researching Historic Buildings in New York City, available at [www.nyc.gov/landmarks](http://www.nyc.gov/landmarks).

### See if Your Work Requires an LPC Permit

Maybe you don't need a permit. A permit is **not required** for:

*Ordinary maintenance, repair, and retrofitting of health, safety, and utility equipment*

*Changing light bulbs*

*Repainting equipment or other elements the same color*

#### Unsure whether your work requires a permit?

Contact LPC at 212-669-7817 or [info@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:info@lpc.nyc.gov).

# What You Will Need

All LPC permit applications and supporting materials are now filed and processed through Portico, the agency's web-based permit application portal. A complete application requires submitting the materials listed below.

## Required Application Materials

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|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>LPC permit application</b> filed on Portico</li> <li>❑ <b>Color photos</b> of the entire building and close-ups of locations of proposed utility, security, or equipment installation for context</li> <li>❑ <b>Comparative drawings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Elevation of the existing condition and proposed installations, except in-kind replacement of existing light fixtures, intercoms, security cameras, and mailboxes</li> <li>– Large-scale details (in section, plan, or elevation) of proposed installations at visible facades only, except in-kind replacement of existing light fixtures,</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intercoms, security cameras, and mailboxes, showing no or minimally exposed conduit</li> <li>– For HVAC on visible facades, floor and/or site plans of the existing condition and locations of proposed HVAC installation only (at visible facades only)</li> <li>– Section of existing conditions and proposed HVAC installations only (at visible facades only)</li> <li>❑ <b>Color specifications/ paint cards</b> at visible facades only</li> <li>❑ <b>Manufacturer cut sheets</b> for light fixtures, intercoms, security cameras, and mailboxes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ <b>Department of Buildings (DOB) filing drawings</b> if proposed work requires a DOB permit</li> </ul> <p><i>When possible, your application materials must be supplemented with a <b>written explanation and/or code citation</b>. You must demonstrate the need to install <b>HVAC, life safety, or utility equipment</b> at a particular location on the primary facade.</i></p> <p><i>If LPC requires additional information after your permit application is reviewed, you will receive a <b>Materials Checklist</b> from LPC staff.</i></p> |
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# Section B

## LPC Rules and Criteria



This is how the Landmarks Preservation Commission works:

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### The LPC Rules establish criteria

that allow staff to review and approve proposals for certain types of work at landmark properties. Permit applications for work that meets the LPC Rules can be approved faster. If the work does not meet the rules, staff may suggest alternatives that do meet the rules – or your proposal may be presented to the LPC Commissioners for review at a public hearing. LPC staff can guide you through this process. Visit [www.nyc.gov/landmarks](http://www.nyc.gov/landmarks) for more information.

### This section explains and illustrates the rules and criteria

for the most common types of work involving health, safety, and utility equipment. See [LPC Rules](#), Section 2-20, for more information.

### → In This Section:

#### General Criteria

Installing Light Fixtures and Intercom Panels

Installing Security Cameras

Installing Mailboxes and Mail Key Lockboxes

Installing Security Gates and Bars

Installing Certain Types of HVAC Equipment at the Base of Buildings

Installing Detachable Flood Protection Barriers



# General Criteria

Staff can issue permits approving the installation of health, safety, and utility equipment if it meets the following general criteria. Certain types of installations may have additional requirements. See the appropriate work type(s) for more information.

**Installation of equipment cannot be on or in front of a primary facade** unless no other option exists, i.e., no feasible alternative exists or the location is mandated by law.

**If the installation needs to be on the primary facade**, it must be placed in a discreet location that does not detract from the building's significant architectural features (e.g., beneath a band course, underneath a stoop, behind an areaway wall or fence, behind plantings), unless there is no other option.

**Equipment must be attached at mortar joints, plain masonry, wood, or metalwork, or concrete paving at the areaway or sidewalk**, and must not be attached through cast iron or on any decorative surfaces.

**If installation requires conduit**, the conduit must be concealed by going through plain masonry or wall cladding behind the installation.

*If this is not possible, staff may approve a maximum of approximately ten inches of visible conduit along a wall surface or architectural element.*

*If surface-mounted, the conduit must be painted to match the background surface and secured into mortar joints where possible — not installed on any decorative surfaces.*

*For conduit related to roadway or sidewalk cafes, penetrations should be in discreet locations and installed through modern infill materials, if feasible.*

*Conduits related to roadway or sidewalk cafes will also need to comply with DOT's Dining Out NYC regulations.*



Conduit or other wiring that's extended from a building to an outdoor dining area at the sidewalk or roadway requires a permit from LPC.



Some equipment is required by law to be installed at a primary facade. In this case, they are located on a non-historic wood storefront bulkhead.



On this building, required equipment and utilities were installed on plain stone and brick at discreet locations on the primary facade.

## Installing Light Fixtures and Intercom Panels

Staff can issue permits approving light fixtures and intercom panels if the installation meets the following criteria:

**Light fixtures and intercom panels, as well as doorbells,** must be installed within or adjacent to a door opening.

**An intercom** can also be installed on a fence or wall in front of the entranceway.

**A maximum of two light fixtures and one intercom panel** can be installed per door opening.

**Design, size, and finish of installations** must be compatible with the architecture of the building (i.e., neutral and discreet).



Staff can issue permits approving light fixtures installed at plain masonry adjacent to a door opening, as seen here, or within the opening.



An intercom installed within a door opening.

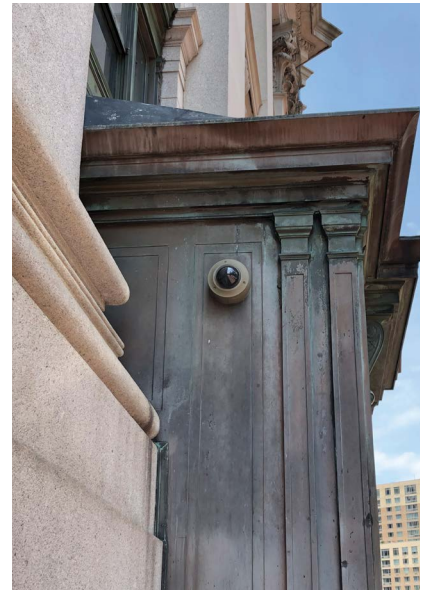
## Installing Security Cameras

Staff can issue permits approving security cameras if installation meets the following criteria:

**Security cameras** must be well spaced to avoid a cluttered, haphazard appearance.

**For small residential or commercial buildings,** no more than two security cameras can be installed for every 25 feet of street frontage.

**For large residential, commercial, and institutional buildings,** no more than three security cameras can be installed for every 25 feet of street frontage.



Two examples of dome-type security cameras finished to match surrounding materials.



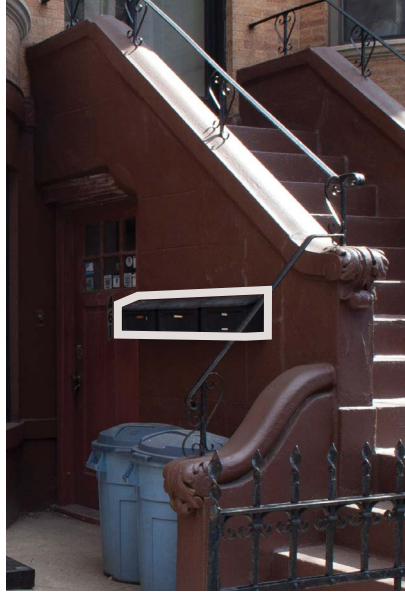
## Installing Mailboxes and Mail Key Lockboxes

Staff can issue permits approving mailboxes and mail key lockboxes if installation meets the following criteria:

**Installed within or adjacent to the door opening**

**Attached to a gate or door underneath the stoop, or on a plain stoop wall adjacent to the opening**

**Attached to an areaway fence or installed on a freestanding post in the areaway**



Mailboxes can be installed at a plain masonry stoop wall adjacent to a basement-level entrance door.



Mailboxes can also be installed on a freestanding post in an areaway.

## Installing Security Gates and Bars

Staff can issue permits approving security gates and bars if installation meets the following criteria:

**Window security bars** can be installed at cellar, basement, or parlor floor windows, if there is a stoop.

**Security gates** can be installed at openings below or under stoops.

*If there is no gate, installing a gate can be approved at staff level.*

*If there is an existing historic gate below the stoop, it must be retained. Replacing it cannot be approved at staff level.*

*If there is an existing door below the stoop but no door existed historically, a new door can be approved at staff level if it has*



Security grilles attached at limited points to window surrounds at the ground floor.

*a high level of transparency in keeping with a gated or open passageway.*

**Security bars and gates** must be attached to the window frame or its surround, or the door surround, at limited attachment points.

**Window security bars and security gates** must match historic ironwork or be simply designed with minimal pickets or other details, and must not include continuous perimeter framing around the bars or opening.



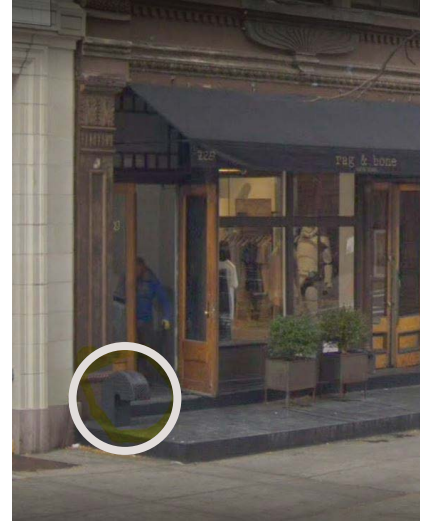
### Installing Certain Types of HVAC Equipment at the Base of Buildings

Staff can issue permits approving certain types of HVAC equipment at the base of buildings if installation meets the following criteria:

Staff can issue permits approving air intake or exhaust at a primary or visible secondary facade if existing structural or other physical constraints prohibit installing the equipment at a non-visible location.

**Interior conditions** that mandate installation elsewhere must not be the result of recent or related construction work that could have been designed to avoid installation at the primary facade.

**Installation** must otherwise be consistent with the criteria set forth for similar installation types found in the HVAC and mechanical section. See Section 2-21 of the LPC Rules and Chapter 12 of this guidebook.



A vent installed at the base of a building, clad in painted metal to blend with the surrounding material.

### Installing Detachable Flood Protection Barriers

LPC encourages resiliency and flood-proofing measures in the historic buildings it regulates so they may best adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Staff can issue permits approving detachable flood protection barriers if installation meets the following criteria:

**Hardware or fasteners for flood protection barriers** must be located at discreet locations on the facade and attached at plain masonry or wall cladding, not through cast iron or other decorative surfaces or features.

**Required plugs or covers** must be finished to match the surrounding material.

**Permanent posts at service and garage door openings and loading bays, and associated hardware,** must be finished to match the surrounding material or otherwise have a neutral finish.



Posts for removable flood protection barriers, all with a neutral finish, installed at plain masonry at select openings.