



**AUGUST 19, 2025**  
**AUDIT**  
**REPORT** NO. 25-05

*Performance Audit of Public Works Permits  
Processing Times*

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

- 27% permits exceeded the expected turnaround times

**PAGE:**

6



505 Travis St. Suite 450  
Shreveport, LA 71101



Office: 318-673-7900  
Fraud Hotline: 318-222-5698

<http://www.shreveportla.gov/1149/Fraud-Hotline>



The Council  
City of Shreveport

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA  
City Internal Auditor  
P.O. Box 31109  
Shreveport, LA 71130-1109

E-Mail Address:  
Leanis.Steward@shreveportla.gov  
Phone: 318.673.7900  
Fax: 318.673.7911

August 19, 2025

Councilwoman Tabatha Taylor  
Chairman, Shreveport City Council

Dear Councilwoman Taylor:

Subject: Audit No. 25-05 – Performance Audit of Public Works Permits Processing Times

Attached please find the report mentioned above. Management comments are included in the report.

Sincerely,

*Leanis L. Steward*

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA  
City Internal Auditor

ts

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Performance Audit of Public Works Permits Processing Times

### Why We Did This Audit

We have completed an audit of the Public Works Permits Processing Times. This audit was conducted as one of our regularly scheduled audits included in the Annual Audit Plan developed by the City Internal Auditor.

Our objective was to determine whether permit applications are processed within the established timeframes—typically 3 to 5 business days for residential permits and 5 to 10 business days for commercial permits.

### What We Recommended:

- Collaborate with MyGovernmentOnline to reconfigure the notification system
- Identify bottlenecks and implement improvements to reduce delays and increase efficiency
- Clearly document permit processing timeframes and ensure they are communicated

### What We Found

In conducting this audit, we found that while many permits were processed within the expected timeframes—3 to 5 business days for residential and 5 to 10 business days for commercials, approximately 27% of permits sampled (100 out of 369) exceeded these targets.

This indicates inefficiencies within the permitting process and highlights opportunities for improvement. Several factors contributed to the delays, including complex permit requirements that necessitate coordination across multiple departments, bottlenecks during the approval and review stages, and challenges related to staffing and managing peak workloads.

Additionally, the Permits Division uses MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) system, which is a software system used by local governments to manage permits and licenses. We observed that the automated notification system within the MGO platform had been disabled due to the excessive volume of non-targeted alerts, which created notification fatigue among staff.

Notifications were being sent for all system actions regardless of relevance, resulting in important messages being overlooked and ultimately impeding effective communication.

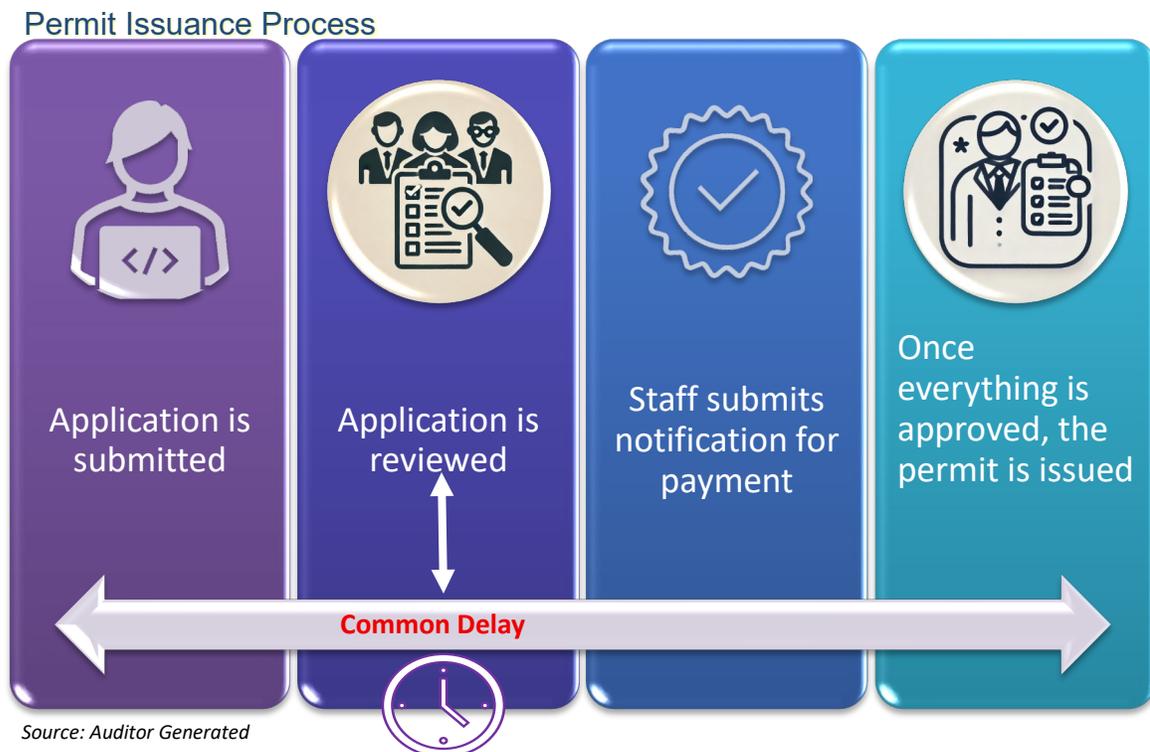
These issues collectively suggest the need for process improvements and system reconfigurations to enhance efficiency, communication, and overall service delivery.

## INDEX

Executive Summary .....	1
Index .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Scope and Methodology.....	4
Findings and Recommendations .....	5
Finding 1: Delays in Permit Processing Times .....	5
Appendix A: Findings Risk Ranking Criteria. ....	9

## Introduction

The Department of Public Works Permits Division monitors construction within the City of Shreveport, Caddo Parish, and The Port, and issues permits for building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work. The permit application may be submitted in person or online through MyGovernmentOnline (MGO), a system many local governments use to manage permit and license processing. Once received, the application is reviewed through the Permits Division and other departments such as Water & Sewerage, Engineering, and Fire. The Permits Division may request any missing documentation from the applicant. After all required information is provided and the application is approved, the Division issues an invoice. Upon payment, the permit is finalized and released. See the following illustration for a brief overview of the permit issuance process; a more detailed version is included in [Finding 1](#).



For this audit, we focused on evaluating whether permits were issued within the established timeframes—typically 3 to 5 business days for residential permits and 5 to 10 business days for commercial permits. The scope of this audit did not include a review of the inspection process after the permit is issued. This report contains one finding with three recommendations. Appendix A contains the risk descriptions for the recommendation risk levels throughout the report.

The objectives of this audit were:

- To determine whether permit applications are processed within the established timeframes—typically 3 to 5 business days for residential permits and 5 to 10 business days for commercial permits.



### **Scope and Methodology**

The scope of this audit was limited to the Department of Public Works Permits Division. The period reviewed was January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. To answer our objectives, we reviewed relevant internal controls and developed audit procedures that included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Interviewed management to enhance the understanding of the process,
- Reviewed City Ordinances pertaining to permits,
- Reviewed applicable documentation and performed test work on data,
- Reviewed the My Government Online (MGO) System data,
- Selected a sample of 369 out of 8,994 permits issued for the year 2024 to calculate the time (business days) it took to issue the permit,
- Considered all five internal control components (control environment, risk, monitoring, information and communication, control activities) of the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government. Internal controls are a process used by management to help an entity achieve its objectives.

The sample size of 369 permits issued were calculated using a sampling calculator and were selected based on the criteria of 95% confidence level and 5% error rate. The sample was selected randomly. The results cannot be projected to the entire population. Random sampling selection was used to improve the overall efficiency of the audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on our audit objectives.

***The Internal Audit Office expresses appreciation to the management and personnel of the Public Works Permits Division for their cooperation and assistance provided during the audit.***



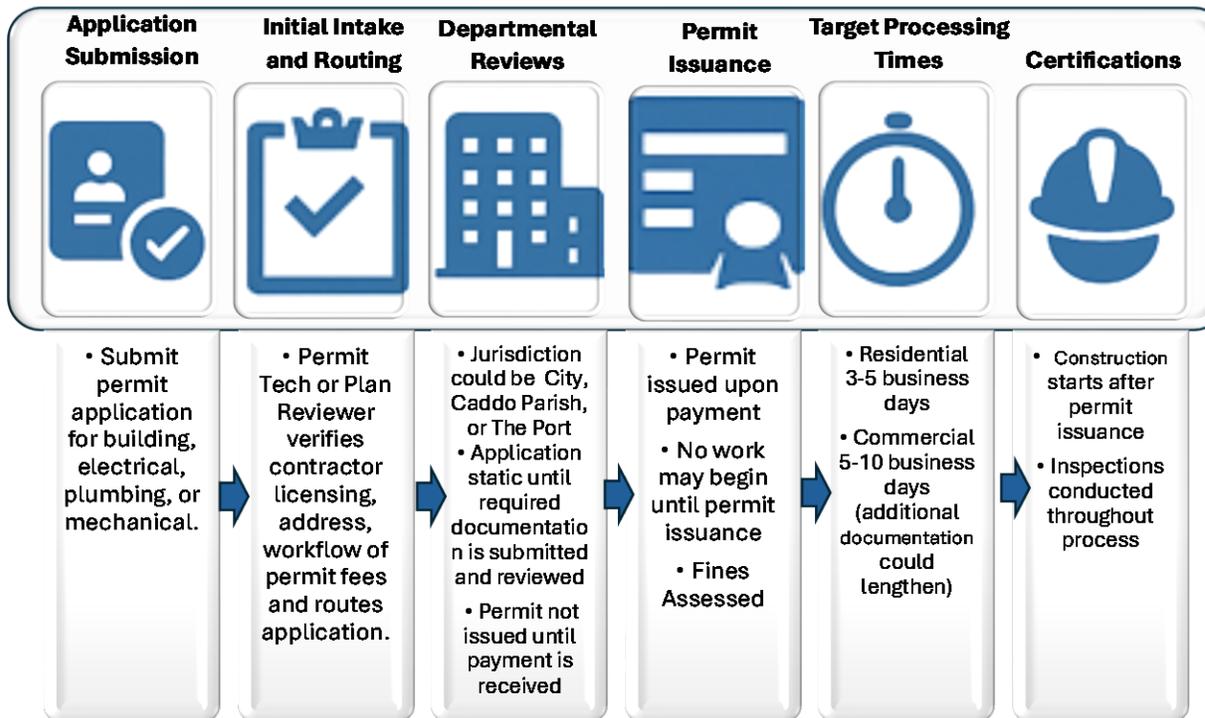


**Objective: To determine whether permit applications are processed within the established timeframes—typically 3 to 5 business days for residential permits and 5 to 10 business days for commercial permits.**

**Finding 1: Delays in Permit Processing Times**

According to the Permits Director, residential permits are typically processed within 3 to 5 business days, and commercial permits within 5 to 10 business days. Below is a detailed illustration of the permit review and issuance process:

## PERMIT REVIEW AND ISSUANCE PROCESS



Source: Auditor Generated

**The scope of this audit did not include a review of the inspection process after the permit is issued.**



## AUDIT NO. 25-05 May 20, 2025

During our review, we selected a sample of 369 out of 8,994 permits issued for the year 2024 to calculate the time it took to issue the permit. We found that 73% of permits (269 out of 369) were issued within these target timeframes. However, 27% (100 permits) exceeded the expected turnaround times, indicating opportunities to improve process efficiency. The following summarizes the late issuance rates by permit type:



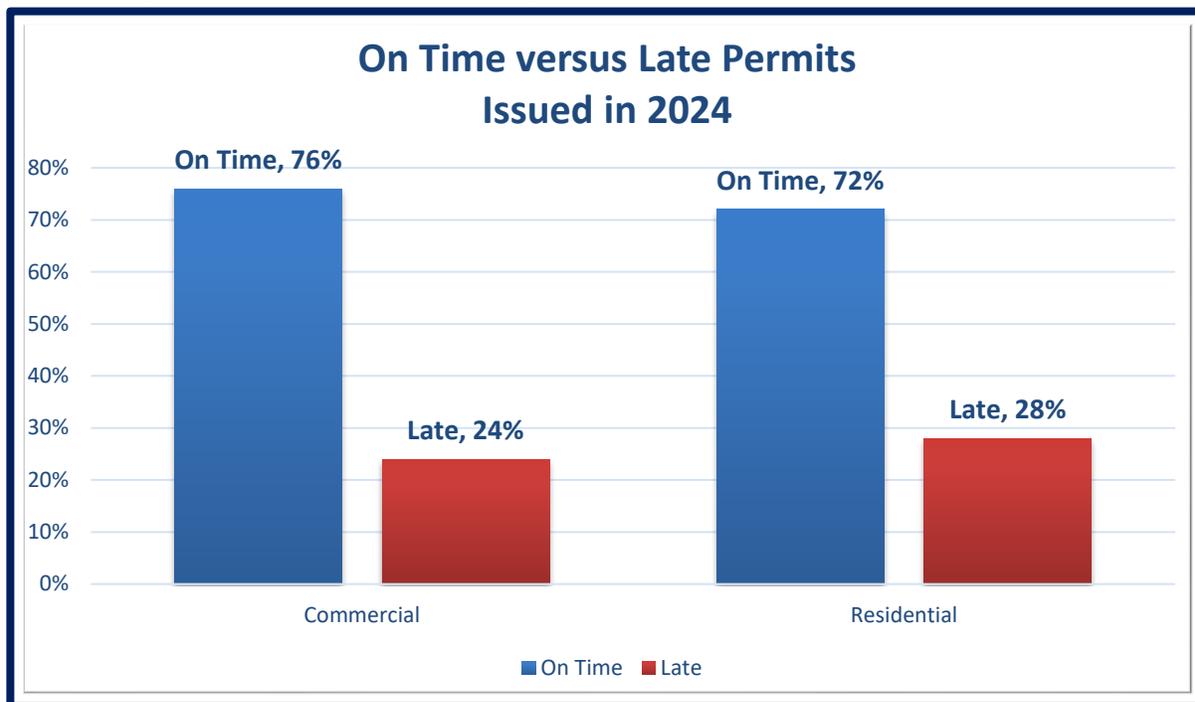
Target Processing Timeframes

**Residential: 3-5 Business Days**

**Commercial: 5-10 Business Days**

- **Commercial permits:** 17 of 70 (24%) were issued late between 11- 222 days
- **Residential permits:** 83 of 299 (28%) were issued late between 6 -135 days

A visual representation of this data is provided in the chart below:



Source: Permits Issued Report

Several factors contributed to these delays, but were not limited to:

- Requesting additional documentation from customers
- No activity on the permit account (e.g., contractor financing not secured, or inspections not scheduled in a timely manner)
- Staff limitations (e.g., someone is out of the office)
- Permits requiring a more complex review
- No formal monitoring or analysis of permit processing times

Additionally, notifications are an important tool for keeping staff informed about key updates and tasks. When properly set up, they ensure that the right people receive



## AUDIT NO. 25-05 May 20, 2025

timely information, helping them to meet deadlines and respond quickly to important issues. We noted that automated notifications within the MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) System had been disabled due to excessive volume. Notifications were triggered for all system actions, regardless of user relevance, resulting in notification fatigue and reduced effectiveness in alerting staff to critical tasks.

To help improve processes, we recommend the following:

### Recommendation:

1. For management to contact MGO support staff and request the notification system be reviewed and reconfigured to target only relevant users based on specific roles and responsibilities within the MGO system.
2. An analysis of the permitting process should be conducted to identify bottlenecks and areas for efficiency improvements, with the goal of reducing the proportion of permits that exceed the expected processing time.
3. Furthermore, ensure that the target timeframes for permit processing be formally documented and communicated across all relevant departments to enhance coordination and efficiency. This documentation should be made readily accessible to all parties involved to ensure clear expectations and alignment of the timeframes.

Risk: Medium

**Management Response:** We have contacted MGO and requested that individual notifications be automatically sent to individual users, and they said they cannot reconfigure the system. If notifications are turned on, they receive all notifications which are hundreds daily. We have created a report to be sent semi-monthly or monthly identifying the bottlenecks and departments that need to review outstanding applications for permits. Hopefully, this will help reduce the time frame to process the permits. We will create a realistic time frame for permit types and notify each department involved in the permitting process.

Due Date: In Progress



**AUDIT NO. 25-05**  
**May 20, 2025**

---

Prepared by:

*Nadia Dunams*

Nadia Dunams, CIA, CRMA, CFE  
Staff Auditor II

*Kelsey Metoyer*

Kelsey Metoyer  
Staff Auditor I

Approved by:

*Leanis L. Steward*

Leanis L. Steward, CPA, CIA  
City Internal Auditor

nd:km:ts

c: City Council  
Clerk of Council  
Mayor  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Carr Riggs and Ingram  
City Attorney  
Public Works



## Appendix A: Findings Risk Ranking Criteria

The chart below summarizes our evaluation of risk for the recommendations outlined in the report. Each recommendation was assessed at a high, medium, or low risk level based on a qualitative assessment of exposure and/or corrective action priority.

Risk Levels	Risk Description
<b>High Risk</b>	Represents a <b>significant</b> level of risk exposure to city assets, public safety, or achievement of objectives or mission. Corrective action should have the highest priority.
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Represents a <b>moderate</b> level of risk exposure to the city from extensive operating inefficiencies or high-level non-compliance issues. Corrective action should occur expeditiously.
<b>Low Risk</b>	Represents a <b>minimal</b> level of risk exposure to the city from inefficiencies or low-level non-compliance issues. Corrective action should occur as appropriate.