



Town of Chester Town Departments: FAQ Guide for Residents

This guide is designed to help residents quickly understand which town department handles common questions, services, and requests. For the best experience, consider pairing each department description with practical details such as office hours, contact information, common forms, fees, response times, and whether the issue is an emergency or non-emergency matter.

Town Hall Services

Q: Which office should I contact about general town government questions?

A: The Select Board and Town Administrator help guide the overall operation of town government. They respond to general inquiries, support policy and budget planning, coordinate services across departments, and help residents find the right office for assistance.

Q: Which office should I contact for vital records, elections, licenses, and official postings?

A: The Town Clerk maintains official town records, including birth, death, and marriage certificates. The office also manages voter registration, local and state elections, business certificates, dog licenses, tag sales, and public meeting postings.

Q: Which department should I contact about roads, drainage, snow removal, or highway maintenance?

A: The Highway Department maintains town roads, sidewalks, drainage systems, and related infrastructure. The department also handles snow and ice control, road maintenance, and repairs that help keep public ways safe and passable.

Public Safety

Q: Which department should I contact about public safety concerns or police services?

A: The Police Department helps protect public safety by enforcing laws, responding to emergencies, investigating incidents, and supporting community safety through services such as wellness checks and public education.

Q: Which department should I contact about fire, rescue, or emergency response services?

A: The Fire Department responds to fires, medical emergencies, rescue calls, hazardous materials incidents, and burn permit questions. The department also conducts fire prevention inspections and provides public safety education.

Property and Development

Q: Which board should I contact about zoning, land use, or development proposals?

A: The Planning Board reviews land use, development proposals, and zoning-related matters. It helps guide long-term growth, reviews certain projects and subdivisions, and works to support orderly development while preserving the character of the community.

Q: Which office should I contact for building permits, inspections, or code questions?

A: The Building Inspector issues building permits, performs inspections, and helps ensure that construction projects meet applicable state and local building and zoning requirements.

Q: Which office should I contact for electrical or plumbing permits and inspections?

A: The Electrical and Plumbing Inspectors issue permits, conduct inspections, and help ensure that electrical and plumbing work in residential and commercial properties meets code requirements for safety and compliance.

Q: Which department should I contact about public health, septic, housing, or transfer station matters?

A: The Board of Health helps protect public health through inspections, septic and housing oversight, public health permitting, and response to health-related concerns. In Chester, this department also oversees transfer station operations.

Community Services

Q: Which department should I contact about parks, recreation programs, or community activities?

A: Parks and Recreation manages town parks, playgrounds, and recreational opportunities. The department may organize seasonal programs, community events, sports activities, and family-friendly offerings for residents of different ages.

Q: Which department should I contact about library services, programs, or internet access?

A: The library provides books, digital resources, programs, and educational opportunities for residents of all ages. It may also offer community space, internet access, and events that support learning and connection.

Q: Which department should I contact about public schools or school administration?

A: The School Department oversees public education, including curriculum, staffing, and school operations through the School Committee. In Chester, the schools are part of a regional school system that operates as a separate entity from town government.

Q: Which board should I contact about wetlands or environmentally sensitive areas?

A: The Conservation Commission helps protect wetlands and natural resources. It reviews projects that may affect environmentally sensitive areas and administers applicable environmental regulations.

Q: Which department should I contact about senior services or Council on Aging programs?

A: The Council on Aging provides programs, services, and referrals that support older adults. Services may include social activities, transportation assistance, meals, wellness programming, and connections to community resources.

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Finance

Q: Which office should I contact about town accounting or financial records?

A: The Accountant helps manage the town's financial records, reviews warrants and supporting documentation, and works to ensure that financial activity is recorded accurately and in the appropriate accounts.

Q: Which office should I contact about tax bills or municipal payments?

A: The Tax Collector is responsible for collecting property taxes, motor vehicle excise taxes, and other municipal bills and payments owed to the town.

Q: Which office should I contact about town funds, receipts, or disbursements?

A: The Treasurer manages town funds, banking, receipts, and authorized disbursements. The office maintains records of financial transactions and helps support the town's overall fiscal operations.

Q: Which office should I contact about property values, abatements, or exemptions?

A: The Assessor's Office determines property values for tax purposes, maintains property records, and administers exemptions and abatements in accordance with state and local requirements.

Utilities

Q: Which department should I contact about electric service or electric billing?

A: The Municipal Electric Department maintains the town's electric infrastructure and handles electric service billing for residential and commercial customers. In Chester, it is an enterprise fund, meaning it is part of the town but operates separately from the general municipal budget.

Q: Which department should I contact about water service, water quality, or water billing?

A: The Water Department maintains the town's water infrastructure, monitors water quality, and manages water billing for residents and businesses. In Chester, it is an enterprise fund, meaning it is part of the town but operates separately from the general municipal budget.

Who Should I Contact If...

- I need a birth, death, or marriage certificate — Town Clerk
- I need to register to vote or have an election question — Town Clerk
- I have a pothole, drainage, or snow removal concern — Highway Department
- I need help with a building permit or inspection — Building Inspector
- I need an electrical or plumbing permit — Electrical or Plumbing Inspector
- I have a zoning, subdivision, or land use question — Planning Board
- I have a wetlands or environmental permitting question — Conservation Commission
- I have a septic, housing, or transfer station question — Board of Health
- I have a police or non-emergency public safety concern — Police Department
- I need fire, rescue, or emergency assistance — Fire Department or 911 in an emergency
- I have a tax bill or payment question — Tax Collector
- I have a property value, abatement, or exemption question — Assessor's Office
- I have a question about senior services — Council on Aging
- I need information about recreation programs or parks — Parks and Recreation
- I have a question about electric service or billing — Municipal Electric Department
- I have a question about water service, quality, or billing — Water Department
- I am not sure who to call — Select Board and Town Administrator