

## ADDRESSES AND HOUSE NUMBERS

Addresses and house numbers are essential to navigating any city. They help avoid confusion and make finding specific buildings and entrances as easy as possible. Addresses are used by the US Postal Service for mail delivery, and they are necessary for speedy delivery of emergency services such as police and fire protection and ambulatory service. They also are used to distinguish multiple entrances in single buildings, e.g. service versus main entrances, and multiple retail outlets.

Throughout New York City, addresses in each borough are assigned by the respective Borough President's Office.<sup>1</sup> In Manhattan, address requests are processed through the Borough President's Topographical Bureau.

Addresses for building entrances are designed to maintain a sequential order and follow the established address system of keeping odd-numbered addresses on one side of the street and even-numbered addresses on the other. For example, only addresses within the range of 200-299 are assigned to the "200-block" of West 15<sup>th</sup> Street which is between Seventh and Eighth avenues; and 100 Broadway would be located between 98 and 102 Broadway, across the street from 101 and 103 Broadway.

In addition to the responsibility of assigning addresses, the Borough President's Office is also charged with establishing and enforcing rules regulating the display and visibility of house numbers.<sup>2</sup>

### *When Should I Request a House Number?*

- If you are developing a new building on a vacant or previously used lot and need a standard address for the building.
- If you are seeking an individual address for a retail outlet, a secondary entrance or a service entrance for an existing building.

### *When Should I Not Request a House Number?*

- If you are seeking an honorary street name, wherein you would like a secondary street sign to be placed alongside a standard City street sign. To request an honorary street name, contact the local [City Councilmember](#).
- If you are seeking an address that does not adhere to the City's standard numbering system, or is not based on recognized New York City streets, but rather on a building's location in a unique and notable area, such as Times Square. To request such an address, please see *Requesting a Vanity Address*.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the Administrative Code of the City of New York, Title 3, §3-505, §3-506 and §3-507. See Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to The Rules of the City of New York, Title 45, §3-01 and §3-02. See Appendix II.

### ***Requesting a House Number***

1. Assignment of house numbers may be granted only after building entrances have been constructed and are visible from the street.
2. Requests for house number assignments must be made, in writing, by the owner of the property or their legal representative. The letter of request should identify:
  - The owner and their contact information;
  - The building's block and lot number;
  - The location of entrance(s);
  - If the building is occupied, new, in-construction, or pre-construction;
  - The address(es) requested, and any existing addresses; and
  - The purpose of entrance(s), e.g. residential, retail, service, etc.
3. Include with the letter a copy of the PW-1 application and a copy of approved architectural plans showing the first floor with entrance(s) and street frontages. The form is available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/pw1.pdf>.
4. Deliver by hand, mail or courier all application materials and a money order or cashiers check for \$300 per address requested, made payable to the "Manhattan Borough President's Office." Deliveries should be addressed to:

Manhattan Borough President's Office  
Topographical Bureau – 19th Floor  
1 Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007
5. A site visit will be performed by the Borough President's staff, after which the applicant will be notified in writing of the request's approval or disapproval.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Address Verification***

If you require an Address Verification for the Department of Buildings in order to obtain permits during construction, please follow the same steps as to request a house number, but note on your letter that the request is for verification. The fee for this service is \$250. This must be done before the PW-1 form is submitted to the Department of Buildings.

For more information, please contact Hector Rivera, Topographical Bureau Assistant, at [hrivera@manhattanbp.nyc.gov](mailto:hrivera@manhattanbp.nyc.gov).

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<sup>3</sup> Addresses are valid only after approval and should not be used until official notification of its approval has been received. Completing this process does not guarantee the request's approval.

## **VANITY ADDRESSES**

Borough Presidents also have the authority to assign Vanity Addresses, which deviate from the typical address scheme.<sup>4</sup> A Vanity Address should make the building easier to find, or at least no less difficult to find, than the official address number. The address should not create confusion as to a building's location, in deference to both public safety and convenience.

Vanity Addresses are generally considered in two situations:

- For entrances to buildings that front on two or more streets, a vanity address may be requested to assign an address associated with one street frontage to an entrance on a different street. For example, for a building located on the corner of an avenue and a side-street, a vanity address may be requested to “pull” an avenue address to a side-street entrance, or vice-versa.
- Vanity Addresses may also be requested for buildings located within or fronting unique places in the city, such as Times Square and Penn Plaza.

### ***Should I Request a Vanity Address?***

- Vanity Addresses may be appropriate for buildings fronting multiple streets and/or avenues.
- Vanity Addresses may also be appropriate for buildings located inside or directly bordering a small, unique and notable area, whose inclusion in an address will help make the building easier to locate.

### ***When is a Vanity Address Inappropriate?***

- Vanity addresses are unnecessary for secondary entrances and/or service entrances.
- If you are seeking an honorary street name, wherein you would like a secondary street sign to be placed alongside a standard city street sign. To request an honorary street name, contact the local [City Councilmember](#).

### ***What Makes an Appropriate Vanity Address?***

- A Vanity Address must have a clear association with a known area, street or avenue.
- A Vanity Address must have a logical relationship to any existing address-numbering systems referencing the same known area, street or avenue.
- A Vanity Address must avoid creating confusion as to a building's location.

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<sup>4</sup> Vanity Addresses are defined by The Rules of the City of New York, Title 45, Chapter 3, Subchapter B, Section §3-04(f). See Appendix II.

### ***Requesting a Vanity Address***

1. Requests for Vanity Addresses must be made, in writing, by the owner of the property or their legal representative. The letter of request should identify:
  - The owner and their contact information;
  - The building's block and lot number;
  - The location of entrance(s);
  - If the building is occupied, new, in construction, or pre-construction;
  - The address(es) requested and any existing addresses; and
  - The purpose of entrance(s), e.g. residential, retail, service, etc.
2. The letter should describe the rationale for the requested Vanity Address. In considering Vanity Address requests, the Borough President's Office will strongly consider the relationship of the building, specifically its entrances, to Manhattan's official streets, as well as any relationship to unique areas.
3. Include with the letter a copy of the PW-1 application a copy of approved architectural plans showing the first floor with entrance(s), street frontage(s), and measurements of distance. This must be done before the PW-1 form is submitted to the Department of Buildings. The form is available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dob/downloads/pdf/pw1.pdf>.
4. Deliver by hand, mail or courier all application materials and a money order or cashiers check for \$11,000 made payable to the "Manhattan Borough President's Office." Deliveries should be addressed to:

Manhattan Borough President's Office  
Topographical Bureau – 19th Floor  
1 Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

For more information, please contact Hector Rivera, Topographical Bureau Assistant, at [hrivera@manhattanbp.nyc.gov](mailto:hrivera@manhattanbp.nyc.gov).

## **APPENDIX I - Title 3 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York**

### **§ 3-505 Street Numbers.**

#### **a. Requirements.**

The owner, agent, lessee or other person in charge of any building in the city upon a street to which street numbers of buildings have been assigned by the president of the borough in which such building is situated, shall cause the proper street number or numbers of such buildings to be displayed in such manner that the street number or numbers may at all times be plainly legible from the sidewalk in front of such building. The term "front" as used in this section shall be construed to mean that side of the building which faces the street on which the number or numbers of such building, or premises on which such building is situated, have been allotted. The number or numbers shall be displayed on such side of such building or premises. Each borough president shall have the power to establish and enforce rules and regulations relating to the size, form, visibility and location of street numbers in accordance with the requirements of this section.

#### **b. Violations.**

If the owner, lessee, agent or other person in charge of any building in the city upon a street to which street numbers of buildings have been assigned by the president of the borough in which such building is situated shall fail to display the proper street number of such building, as provided in the foregoing subdivision, the president of the borough in which such building is situated shall forthwith serve such person or persons with a copy of this section, and if after thirty days' notice the owner, lessee, agent or other person in charge of such building shall fail or neglect to comply with the provisions thereof, he or she shall be subject to a penalty of twenty-five dollars, which shall be sued for and collected in the name of the city. Any person who shall continue any such offence shall pay an additional sum of five dollars for each day such offense shall continue.

### **§ 3-506 Borough presidents to adjust numbering.**

In all cases where a street shall have been numbered or renumbered, the borough president having jurisdiction shall thereafter adjust and renumber such street as the same may be required from time to time. In numbering and renumbering houses, the borough president shall leave sufficient numbers on each block, so that, under any circumstances, there would be but one block where a change would be required, in case of renumbering at any subsequent time.

### **§ 3-507 Numbers in certain sections of the borough of Manhattan.**

Whenever any street north of Ninth street, inclusive, in the borough of Manhattan, shall be directed to be numbered or renumbered, the president of such borough shall cause the numbers to commence at Fifth avenue, numbering east and west, beginning with number one, on the west side of Fifth avenue; number one hundred, on the west side of Sixth avenue; number two hundreds on the west side of Seventh avenue, and so on, east and west of Fifth avenue, through the whole series of streets north of Ninth street, and including Ninth street. Such streets shall hereafter be called and known as East Ninth and West Ninth street, and so on, the dividing line to be Fifth avenue.

## **APPENDIX II - Title 45 of the Rules of the City of New York**

### **§ 3-01 House Number Specifications.**

#### **(a) Specifications.**

All house numbers shall be at least 5 inches in height and may be metal, metal foil, glass, plastic, wood or paint in composition; where such house numbers are displayed in paint, such numbers shall bear an even and uniform 5/8"

#### **(b) Location**

All house numbers shall be located at either of the following locations:

- (1) On the front wall of the building within two (2) feet of the knob side of the door and not less than four (4) feet from the bottom thereof nor at a height greater than the height of the door; or
- (2) On the front wall of the building above the door, at the center line of the opening and within two (2) feet of the height of the door. All transoms shall be considered part of the building wall for purposes of these Rules and Regulations; or
- (3) Where an entrance door is recessed in excess of three (3) feet from the building line, the house numbers shall be placed on the front wall of the building nearest the front entrance in accordance with either subdivision (b) or paragraph (2) above; and
- (4) Such other locations on the front of the building as may be approved by the Office of the Borough President.
- (5) The term "front" shall mean the side of the building which faces the street on which numbers have been assigned.

#### **(c) Responsibility for display and illumination.**

All owners, agents, lessees or other persons in charge of buildings to which house numbers have been assigned by the Office of the Borough President shall be responsible for the conspicuous display of such numbers, so that they may at all times be plainly legible from the sidewalk in front of such buildings. Proper illumination for house number shall be provided for all buildings to be constructed, modernized or renovated.

#### **(d) Penalties for violations.**

Failure to comply with these Rules and Regulations and the Administrative Code applicable thereto, shall subject the owner, lessee, agent or other person in charge of any building to the penalties provided for in the Administrative Code.

### **§ 3-02 Directional Sign-Display of House Numbers.**

These Rules and Regulations shall apply in addition to the "House Numbers" regulations in all cases where the Borough President of Manhattan determines that house numbers may not be clearly visible from the street upon which the address is assigned.

Note: This situation usually arises with respect to buildings which are set back from the street, where the entrances are routed out of a parallel plane to the building line, or in cases where buildings do not front on City Street.

#### **(a) Sign facing city streets.**

A directional sign shall be installed in the proximity of the building line, facing the street upon which the address is assigned. The sign shall display all the assigned house

numbers, in addition to the name of the street, and shall include arrows or other approved symbols to direct pedestrians toward the building entrance.

**(b) Additional signs.**

- (1) Based on Distance of Building Entrance to Street.  
One additional directional sign shall be posted for each two hundred feet of distance between the building entrance and the street upon which the address is given.
- (2) Based on Changes of Direction between Building Entrance and Street.  
One additional directional sign shall be posed at each change in direction to be traveled between the building entrance and the street upon which the address is assigned.

**(c) Posted of address on door.**

The complete address, which shall include the house number and the name of the street upon which the address is assigned, shall be placed upon the entrance door in conformance with the "house numbers" regulation.

**§ 3-03 Interior Directional Signs.**

**(a) These Rules and Regulations shall apply, in all cases where the Borough President of Manhattan determines that house numbers may not clearly direct the public to their designated location within the building(s) assigned.**

Note: This situation usually arises with respect to developments where two or more buildings have a common entrance; or in cases where specific building towers or sections of a building require separate house number designations.

**(b) Interior directional sign(s) to be posted within lobby.**

An interior directional sign shall be installed within the immediate lobby area of the main entrance, which clearly directs the public to the appropriate tower(s) or section(s) of the building. The sign shall display all the assigned house numbers, in addition to the name of the street, and shall include arrows or other symbols as approved by the Manhattan Borough President's Office.

**(c) Additional interior directional signs required.**

1. One additional interior directional sign shall be posted for each 100 feet of distance between the lobby and the appropriate tower or section of the building to which the address is assigned.
2. One additional interior directional sign shall be posted at each change in direction to be traveled between the lobby and appropriate tower or section of the building to which the address is assigned.

**(d) Address to be posted at base of each tower.**

The complete address, which shall include the house number and the name of the street upon which the address is assigned, shall be placed within the entry area of the assigned portion of the building, or at the base of the appropriate tower.

**(e) Review of Plans for Directional Signs:**

The Manhattan Borough President's Office may require the submittal of proposed plans of directional signs, for review and approval, prior to the fabrication and installation of directional signs.

### § 3-04 Definitions.

- (a) **“Alteration Map”** means a map which shows the proposed changes to the map which shows the proposed changes to the City Map and is prepared by the Topographical Bureau or a qualified consultant who is a licensed professional engineer or registered architect.
- (b) **“Alteration Map Preparation”** means preparation and processing of Alteration Maps by the Manhattan Borough President’s Topographical staff from inception through final review.
- (c) **“Alteration Map Review”** means the review and processing of Alteration Maps prepared by a person other than the Manhattan Borough President’s Topographical staff, including consulting engineers and developers.
- (d) **“Address Assignment”** means the issuance and recording of house number(s) for specific lot or lots.
- (e) **“Address Verification”** means the issuance and verification of a new house number and certification of the relationship of a lot to mapped streets, as well as the verification of an existing house number and the certification of the relationship of a lot to mapped streets.
- (f) **“Vanity Address Assignment”** means a request and assignment of an address that is not a regular sequential house number, but instead refers to a geographical designation, e.g. Times Square, or a new designation, not including a street name, e.g., Penn Plaza, Morton Square.

### § 3-05 Schedule of Fees.

- (a) **the fees for the processing of the below-listed applications and requests submitted to the Topographical Bureau shall be as follows:**
  - 1. Alteration Map Preparation \$12,000 for the first three map sheets and \$2,500 for additional pages not to exceed a total charge of \$18,000.
  - 2. Alteration Map Review \$6,000 for the first three map sheets and \$1,500 for additional pages not to exceed a total of \$9,000.
  - 3. Address Assignment \$300.00
  - 4. Address Verification \$250,00
  - 5. Vanity Address \$11,000.00
- (b) **Reserved.**

### § 3-06 Payment Method.

Except as specifically provided in this section, every application for the preparation of an Alteration map, review of an alteration map, address assignment, address verification, or vanity address request, made after April 1, 2004, shall include a non-returnable fee, which shall be paid by certified check or money order made payable to the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. Fees shall be paid when the application is filed and no application will be processed by the Borough President’s office until the fee is paid in full.