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Do I Need a Permit?

Building Guide for Homeowners

What you need to apply for a building permit:



<input type="checkbox"/>	Site Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Floor Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction Details
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit Application

Why Do I need a Permit?

There are many important reasons to obtain building permits and to have inspections performed for your construction project.

Protects property values

Your home is typically your largest investment. If your construction project does not comply with the building codes, your investment could lose value.

Saves Money

Homeowners insurance policies may not pay for damages caused by work done without permits and inspections.

Makes Selling Property Easier

Listing associations require owners to disclose any home improvements or repairs and whether permits were obtained. Many financial institutions will not finance a purchase without proof of a final inspection. If you decide to sell a home or building that has had modifications without a permit, you may be required to tear down the addition, leave it unoccupied or do costly repairs.



DID YOU KNOW?

- If you obtain a "homeowner" permit you are the responsible party of record for the permit.
- If your work is being performed by a contractor, you may protect yourself from possible liability if the contractor applies for the proper permit in his or her name.
- If you plan to do your own work, with the exception of various trades that you plan to subcontract, the subcontractors must apply for trade permits.
- If you plan to do your own work, including all of the trade work, then you may apply for the permit.
- Unlicensed contractors often request the homeowner to obtain a "homeowner" permit. This is illegal and could be dangerous. The unlicensed contractor may not have the skill and experience to properly perform the work you are paying them to do.
- It would benefit you to hire a licensed contractor to perform the mechanical, electrical and plumbing work.
- Permits are valid for work to begin within six months.

Improves safety

Your permit allows the building department to inspect for potential hazards and unsafe construction. By ensuring your project meets the minimum building code standards of safety, the building department can reduce the risk of fire, structural collapse and other issues that might result in costly repairs, injuries and even death. Inspections complement the contractor's experience and act as a system of checks and balances that can result in a safer project.

Permits

Permits are required by ordinance. Work without a permit may be subject to removal or other costly remedies.

Tips For Hiring Contractors

- ◆ Hire only licensed contractors;
- ◆ Get at least 3 bids;
- ◆ Get 3 references, and ask to see a project;
- ◆ Get it in writing, but before you sign the contract, make sure you completely understand;
- ◆ Do not make final payment until you have received a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or Certificate of Completion (COC) or until you receive final inspection approval;
- ◆ **Verify that the contractor applied and obtained the required permits prior to work starting.**



When Are Permits Required?

Permits are required when building, remodeling or enlarging a building. Permits are also required for other improvements to your property. Projects that are cosmetic, such as painting, wallpapering, carpeting, cabinets and trim work, etc., do not require permits. Additionally, permits are not required when replacing fixtures on existing wiring or plumbing.

The following is a partial list of projects for which a permit is **required**:

- ◆ Construction of a main building
- ◆ Construction of an accessory building (including permanent and portable storage sheds, gazebos, carports, patio covers).
- ◆ Foundation repairs.
- ◆ Additions to a building.
- ◆ Remodeling of a building requiring the addition or replacement of walls or windows.
- ◆ Building or replacing a deck more than 30" above grade.
- ◆ Electrical work. (Repair work such as replacing switches, plugs and ballasts is exempt).
- ◆ Plumbing work (except for repair or replacement of lines less than two feet in length).
- ◆ Water heaters (replacing or adding).
- ◆ Water softeners.
- ◆ Replacing water or sewer lines. (Repair work such as exchange of washers and faucets is exempt. Also, repair or replacement of lines less than two feet in length do not require a permit)
- ◆ Irrigation systems (lawn sprinklers). This includes new systems and systems that are extended or modified.
- ◆ Installing or replacing a furnace.
- ◆ Installing or replacing an air conditioning system.
- ◆ Building or replacing a fence. A permit is not required if it involves replacing less than 50% of the fence pickets. Permits are always required when any fence posts are replaced.
- ◆ Replacing a roof.
- ◆ Installing or replacing any sidewalk, driveway or driveway approach (the portion of the drive connecting to the street or alley).
- ◆ Building a swimming pool, repairing or filling in a swimming pool.
- ◆ Building a spa (self contained portable plug-in type spas require an electrical permit)
- ◆ Demolition of a building.