The Benefits of Building Permits

By reading this brochure you've already taken the first step toward protecting the outcome and investment value of your construction project and guarding against a lawsuit or injury. The following information describes simple steps you can take to obtain a building permit and how permits can work for you. You'll be surprised at how easy the whole process is.

The truth is, building permits are very beneficial to you and your community. By working with expert code officials, you will benefit from their knowledge of building codes to ensure your construction project is built right, will be safe, and will last. Read on to discover the "Benefits of Building Permits."

WHAT'S A BUILDING PERMIT?

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications.

WHEN DO YOU NEED A PERMIT?

The best way to find out if you need a permit is to call your local building department. Discuss your plans with the code official before beginning construction to determine whether you need a permit. Even if a permit is not needed, the code official will answer construction questions and may provide valuable advice.

PERMITS ARE USUALLY REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- New buildings
- Additions (bedrooms, bathrooms, family rooms, etc.)
- Residential work (decks, garages, fences, fireplaces, pools, water heaters, etc.)
- Renovations (garage conversions, basement furnishings, kitchen expansions, reroofing, etc.)
- Electrical systems
- Plumbing systems
- HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning) systems

Your home or business is an investment. If your construction project does not comply with the codes adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced. Property insurers may not cover work done without permits and inspections. 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 make costly repairs.

A property owner who can show that code requirements were strictly and consistently met—as demonstrated by a code official's carefully maintained records—has a strong ally if something happens to trigger a potentially destructive lawsuit.

Your permit also allows the code official to protect the public by reducing the potential hazards of unsafe construction and ensuring public health, safety, and welfare. By following code guidelines, the completed project will meet minimum standards of safety and will be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future owners.

The Simple Permit Process

TALK TO YOUR LOCAL CODE OFFICIAL

Your code official wants your project to be a success and will help you avoid potential problems that could cost you time and money. You will be asked some basic questions (What are you planning to do? Where?), advised of any requirements, and, if necessary, referred to other departments for their approval. The code official will provide you with the resources and information needed for compliance with the applicable building codes. You will then receive an application for a building permit.

SUBMIT APPLICATION

At this stage you will document the "Who, What, When, Where, and How" of the job, along with any sketches or plans of the proposed work.

REVIEW PROCESS

In a brief amount of time, the code official will review your plans and determine if your project is in compliance with local requirements. If your plans meet these requirements, a permit is issued. If not, the code official may suggest solutions to help correct the problem.

RECEIVE PERMIT

Now that you have been approved for a permit, you have legal permission to start construction. A fee, based on the size of the job, is collected to cover the cost of the application, the review, and the inspection process. An experienced code official is available to you should you have any questions concerning your project. You should consider your code official as an ally who will help you make your project a success. Separate permits are typically required for electrical, plumbing, and heating or air-conditioning work.

JOB-SITE VISITS

On-site inspections will be required to make certain the work conforms to the permit, local codes, and plans. Again, you will have access to the expertise of the code official to help you with questions or concerns regarding the project and to minimize potentially costly mistakes. The code official will let you know approximately how many inspections may be needed for your project. Usually, a one- or two-day notice is needed when requesting visits.

FINAL APPROVAL

The code official will provide documentation when construction is complete and code compliance is determined. You will then have the personal satisfaction of a job done right. Enjoy your new surroundings with the peace of mind and the knowledge that they meet the safety standards in your community.

It takes everyone in a community to keep our homes, schools, offices, stores, and other buildings safe for public use. Your safe construction practices help protect you, your family, your friends, and your investment. Be sure to get your local code official involved with your project, because the building department is an important ally, from start to finish.

Support Building Safety!

For more information about building safety codes and local requirements, contact your local building department below:

CITY OF CHAMPAIGN
BUILDING SAFETY DIVISION
307 SOUTH RANDOLPH
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

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