



Construction Permit Tips for Homeowners

**CITY OF HIGHLAND BUILDING DIVISION
27215 BASELINE, HIGHLAND, CA 92346
(909) 864-8732**

BULLETIN

January 2009

Home owners thinking about remodeling their home or adding other improvements, such as decks, spas or wall, many times have a number of questions about building permits. This information is designed to give homeowners basic knowledge of when construction permits and other approvals are required by the City. It also answers some of the most frequently asked questions and offers tips from the City. Since each construction project is unique, we invite you to call the City for answers to your specific questions.

WHAT ARE PERMITS AND WHY DO I NEED ONE?

Permits are the way the City regulates construction. This is designed to ensure that all construction in the City is safe. The safety of the occupants in a building is the primary reasons for having construction codes. The City Has adopted the 2007 series, California Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electric, Fire and 2008 California Energy codes that became effective in January 2010. In addition there are federal, state and local laws that govern construction, such as those covering energy conservation and disabled access requirement.

There are several different types of permits, based on the types of construction: structural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical. The complete demolition and relocation of building also require permits.

Obtaining the permit is just the first step in the process. In this step, you may need to create plans to submit to the division, make a plot plan for you property showing the improvements, and show the type of construction materials you will be using. Once plans are approved, you are required to build the project to those plans. If any changes are made to the plans, they must be made with the City's approval. The second half of the process is the inspection of the work.

WHEN DO I NEED A CONSTRUCTION PERMITS?

A construction permit is needed for all new construction. In many cases, a permit is needed for repair or replacement of existing fixtures, such as replacing windows. A plumbing, electrical or mechanical permit may be needed for any additions or alterations to a building's existing system; for example, moving or adding an electrical outlet requires permits. To find out if your project needs a permit, call (909) 864-8732 ext. 228.

WHEN DON'T I NEED A PERMIT?

A construction permit is not needed for items such as wall papering, painting or similar finish work; wood fences six feet in height or lower; shed or play houses that are less than 120 square feet in floor area, wall less than 3 feet above grade that do not support a surcharge, and some other cases exempted by the code. Please call to check with staff to be sure.

For plumbing, mechanical and electrical work, replacement or repair of fixtures (such as changing water faucets) does not normally require a permit. Replacing a water heater or adding a permanently wired light fixture does, however, require a permit.

WHERE DO I GET A PERMIT

Construction permits are issued at the City's Building Division, 27215 Baseline, Highland, CA 92346, Counter hours are 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET A PERMIT?

Permit issuance periods vary; some projects can be fully permitted over the counter, meaning a return trip won't be needed. Some projects, however, require that plans be left for additional review.

WHAT ABOUT ZONING?

Zoning sets up, within a defined area, the types of building and what they will be used for. Zoning is regulated based on maps approved by the City Council. A variance may be obtained in some cases if the property owner wants to build something not allowed in the property's zone. For information regarding zoning question, please contact the Planning Department a (909) 864-8732 Ext. 258.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER APPROVALS OR PERMITS?

Other government agencies may need to review and approve your project. The City will inform you of these reviews during the plan check process.

WHAT IF I DON'T GET A PERMIT?

If a permit, when needed, is not obtained before construction begins, you have violated city codes and regulation and you will be subject to fines and penalties. You'll be required to obtain permits for the work and it must pass inspection or you'll have to return the structure or side to its original condition. If work has been concealed, that needs inspection, you will be required to remove part or all of the construction for the inspection.—Remember...construction codes were created for safety reasons. Work built without a permit can be unsafe, no matter how good it looks.

WHO SHOULD OBTAIN THE PERMIT?

Contractors licensed by the State of California or your agent can obtain permits. The homeowner can also obtain the permits. You can check any license for a contractor to get detail information at the Contractors State License Board website www.cslb.ca.gov.

CAN I DO THE WORK MYSELF OR DO I HAVE TO HIRE A CONTRACTOR

Worker's Compensation: If you will be hiring anyone, you may have to purchase Worker's Compensation Insurance, which is available from a variety of agencies. If you won't be hiring anyone, we'll ask you to sign an "Owner-Builder Statement" to this effect. We can't issue you a permit without the completed Owner Builder Statement. Be sure to follow your approved plans, whether an architect, or designer or our standard construction requirements given to you by the City, draw them. If you change the plans while building the structure, this will cause problems when the project is inspected, if you do decide to make changes, plans will need to be submitted, approved and additional plan check fees may apply.

WHO DRAWS UP THE PLANS?

Qualified individuals such as a draftsman or designer can usually draw up plans for projects such as room additions. Other projects may require plans prepared and signed by an architect or engineer licensed by the State of California.

For projects such as routine lock wall and patio covers, the City has standard specifications that can be followed with certain limitations. Those specifications, together with a plot plan showing your project, are accepted by the Building Division as plans. In addition, some "kit-type" projects come with construction plans. Before you buy, check with the Building Staff to verify that the "kit" is either has a listing from an acceptable testing agency or has plans and specifications that are reviewed and approved.

WHAT ABOUT A CONTRACTOR?

The City recommends that you deal only with a contractor licensed by the State of California. The Contractors' Licensing Board's telephone number is 1-800-321-CSLB (2752).

WHAT ABOUT INSPECTIONS?

It is your responsibility to call us for inspections at specific times during construction. You may have your contractor make the call, but it is still your responsibility, as the property owner, to make sure the inspections are made. Inspections are made during certain points in the project, depending on the work that is being performed. Remember... the project is not complete for legal purposes until it has passed the final inspection.

WHAT IF I HAVE A PERMIT BUT NEVER CALLED FOR AN INSPECTION?

Generally, permits expire after 180 days if no inspections have been made. In order for the project to be complete, it must pass final inspection. If a permit expires before the final inspection, the project is in violation of City codes. If this is your case, call (909) 864-8732 Ext. 228. We'll help you to reactivate the permit or apply for another with as little inconvenience as possible. Our interest is in seeing your project complete.