

Building Permits – General Information

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications. Building permits are needed to erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, remove, convert or demolish any building or structure except as exempted within this article. Building permits must be obtained prior to commencement of work. A fee must be paid for each building permit. Some examples of what you need permits for are as follows:

Pools/Spas – If the pool is less than 5,000 gallons in capacity and the pool walls are entirely above grade, a building permit is not needed although conformance to City ordinance pertaining to pools must be met. Contact the Zoning Administrator for more details.

Fences – Building permits are not required for fences 6’ or under. However, approval is required from the Zoning Administrator for all fence installations within the City of Waseca.

Storage Sheds/Gazebos – If the storage shed or gazebo is 120 sq. ft. or less, not attached to any other structure, you do not need a building permit. However, approval is required from the Zoning Administrator for small shed construction within the City of Waseca. This approval confirms that your setbacks are maintained and proper anchoring of the structure is done.

Non-Roofed Decks/Patios – If the deck or patio is more than 30” above grade and less than 120 sq. ft., a building permit is not required. However, approval is required from the Zoning Administrator for deck/patio construction within the City of Waseca. This approval confirms that your setbacks are maintained.

Replacing Windows – If you are only replacing sashes or re-glazing, you do not need a building permit. Window replacement requires a permit.

Re-Siding – Replacement of siding, fascia, and/or soffits requires a building permit.

Re-Roofing – All re-roofing requires a building permit.

Slabs/Walks – You do not need a building permit, but if work is on City boulevards such as walks and curb cuts, it must be coordinated with the City Engineer.

Driveways – You do not need a building permit, however you must use caution not to building in recorded easements.

Electrical Systems – Plumbing Systems – Heating, ventilating and air conditioning, fireplaces, water heaters – permit needed.

If you are still unsure whether you need a building permit or not or have any related questions, please contact the City of Waseca Building Inspector at 835-9742.

What Good Does a Building Permit Do?

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 do 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, your 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.

What Do I Get for Having a Permit?

The Permit – Once 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. Normally, separate permits are required for electrical, plumbing, and heating or air-conditioning work.

Review Process – The Building 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.

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 ward off 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.