



Construction Permit Tips for Home Owners

CITY OF HEMET BUILDING DIVISION
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INFORMATION
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Home owners thinking about remodeling their home or adding other improvements, such as decks, spas or retaining walls, many times have a number of questions about building permits.

This information is designed to give home owners basic knowledge of when construction permits and other approvals are required by the City of Hemet. 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 of Hemet 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 reason for having construction codes. The City of Hemet will adopt the 2007 California Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Fire, Energy, and Electric Codes that will be effective January 1st, 2008. In addition, there are federal, state and local laws that govern construction, such as those covering energy conservation.

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

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 your property showing the improvements, and show the type of construction materials you'll be using.

Once plans are approved, you're 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 PERMIT?

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 a 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 a permit.

To find out if your project needs a permit, call (951) 765-2475.

WHEN DON'T I NEED A PERMIT?

A construction permit is not needed for items such as wallpapering, painting or similar finish work; wood fences six feet in height or lower; and some other cases. Refer to the 2007 California Building Code, Appendix Chpt. 1, Section 105.2 for additional information. However, reviews may be required from other agencies. Be sure to check before building.

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.

To determine if your project needs a permit, call (951) 765-2475.

WHERE DO I GET A PERMIT?

Construction permits are issued at the City's Building Division, 445 E. Florida Avenue. To obtain a permit, proof of ownership of the property needs to be provided, ie. Grant Deed, along with photo identification.

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. Please refer to "Plan Check Turn-Around Times," *Information Bulletin #102*.

WHAT ABOUT ZONING?

Zoning sets up, within a defined area, the types of buildings 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 a property owner wants to build something not allowed in the property's zone. For information regarding zoning question, please contact the Planning Department at (951) 765-2375.

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 regulations 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 site 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 home owner 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?

Workers' Compensation:

A homeowner is allowed to pull a permit as "owner-builder". However, there are financial, legal and insurance obligations that you may be liable for depending on the situation surrounding your project. You will be asked to sign an Owner's Acknowledgment and Verification of Information at permit issuance. This form touches on your legal responsibilities, but you are encouraged to seek additional information before making your decision. California State Law prohibits the City from issuing you a permit without the completed Owner's Acknowledgment and Verification of Information Form.

Build to the plan:

Be sure to follow your approved plans, whether they are drawn by an architect or designer or our standard construction requirements given to you by the City. If you change the plans while building the structure, this will cause problems when the project is inspected. If you do decide or it is necessary to make changes to the approved plans, you will need to submit the revised plan for approval and additional plan check fees will be due.

WHO DRAWS UP THE PLANS?

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

For projects such as routine block walls, patio cover, the City has standard specifications that can be followed within 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, call (951) 765-2475 to make sure your kit is accepted; then just bring the instruction sheet or other documentation along when you apply for your permit; it serves as plans.

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 the applicant's responsibility to call us for inspections at specific times during construction. If you hire a contractor, it would be his responsibility to call for the inspections. 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 final inspection, the project is in violation of City codes and must be renewed to avoid further legal action.

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL US AT (951) 765-2475.