

Engineered plans may be required for the alteration or repair of the structural portion of an existing building with a ground area of more than 4,000 square feet or that is more than 20 feet in height, or when the occupancy classification requires a fire-and-life-safety review, regardless of the building's size.

### When are plans required?

You must submit structural plans or drawings for any new construction or for an addition or alteration to an existing building.

Plans aren't required for nonstructural repairs and work for which a permit isn't required. However, a change in use or occupancy may require plans even if there are no structural alterations.

Check with your local planning or zoning department to determine whether a permit for change in use or occupancy is required.

### What technical information do I need to submit with my plans?

You may be required to submit some or all of the following:

- plot map
- floor plans
- specifications
- elevations
- mechanical, plumbing, and electrical drawings
- foundation plan
- energy documentation
- structural calculations
- required fire-protection equipment

For information, call the building department in your area.

### Can a permit be issued before the plan review is approved?

No. All plans must be approved before permits are issued. However, with special permission from the

local building department, a partial permit for footing only or foundation and footing only may be issued.

### How can I contact a plans examiner or inspector?

Call your local building department.

### What's the reason for the surcharge on all building permits in Oregon?

The State of Oregon collects a surcharge on all building permits to pay the state's costs of administering the building codes programs (four percent), state inspection costs (two percent), administering and enforcing the state building codes (one percent) and developing and administering the electronic building codes information system (five percent).

**Be an informed consumer.**

**When buying a product or contracting a service:**

- Call the Building Codes Division or the Construction Contractors Board to verify active license and/or registration.
- Call the Better Business Bureau.
- Talk to other consumers.
- Compare prices.
- Ask for references and contact them.
- Be sure you have a written contract and read it carefully before signing.

### State of Oregon offices:

Salem Building Codes.....(800) 442-7457 or (503) 378-4133  
Construction Contractors Board .....(503) 378-4621  
Better Business Bureau .....(503) 226-3981  
Attorney General's Consumer Hotline ..... (877) 877-9392



# ThinkPermit

Protect your home. Protect your family.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS



For more information, visit

[www.thinkpermit.com](http://www.thinkpermit.com)

## When am I required to get a permit?

Permits are generally required for any new construction and alterations and additions to existing buildings, including structural, plumbing, mechanical and electrical work, as well as manufactured dwellings.

However, there are some exceptions to permit requirements. This is provided as general information and may not be applicable to your local jurisdiction. Please call the building department responsible for your area for specific information on permits and inspections or if you are unsure if you need a permit.

## Why do I have to buy a permit to build on my own property?

Oregon and Washington law requires you to obtain permits — even on your own property — to ensure that minimum building standards are met for your own safety and for the safety of future property owners and occupants.

## Who is responsible for obtaining permits?

The property owner or contractor is responsible for obtaining structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and manufactured dwelling setup permits. For electrical work, the law requires that if an electrical contractor performs the work, the contractor is responsible for obtaining the permit. Electrical permits are non-transferable.

## How do I get a construction permit?

To get a construction permit, you must complete a permit application. Permit applications are available from the local building department in your area.

Take or mail the permit application to your local planning department for required land-use approval and to the local sanitation authority or Department of Environmental Quality for sanitation or septic approval.

## When can I start work?

Work may begin when an actual construction permit is issued to you.

If you've submitted plans and specifications, one set of plans stamped "Approved" will be returned to you. These approved plans, along with the construction permit, must be available on the job site and available to the inspector.

## When am I required to obtain local zoning approval?

Before submitting permit applications, you're required to obtain local land use/zoning approval for any new structure and for any work that increases the area or height of a structure or changes the use of a structure.

You may be required to obtain local zoning approval for electrical and plumbing work before a permit will be issued. For more information, contact your local planning and zoning department.

## Where do I get permits?

You can get permits by calling or visiting the local building department in the area where you plan to perform work.

## Can I get a permit by mail or fax?

Yes. Call the local building department in your area for instructions. When seeking a permit through the mail, be sure to state your name, phone number, mailing address, job location, and the type of permit application you need.

You can also request that permit application be faxed to you. In that case, your application should arrive in three to five working days.

## How long will it take to get a permit through the mail?

You should receive your permit application in three to five working days. Your permit will be issued to you when all of the information required on the application is received. Check with your local building department for instructions and requirements.

If your project requires a plan review, the permit and plans will be issued and mailed to you after your plans are approved. Upon submittal of a complete application, a plan review can take up to two weeks for one- and two-family dwellings (residential construction) and up to four weeks for commercial projects. Review times vary, depending on the complexity of the project and the level of information submitted with your application.

## What happens if I don't send all the fees and paperwork with my permit application?

We'll contact you by phone or mail to request additional information or fees for processing your application, and this may cause a delay.

## How do I figure permit fees?

Fee schedules and valuation tables are available to help you determine permit fees. Contact the jurisdiction for your area.

## When does my permit expire?

Your permit expires if work isn't started within 180 days from the date of issue. If you can't work within a 180-day period and don't wish to abandon the project, you may submit a written request to extend your permit for an additional 180-day period.

## Why do I need a plumbing permit to replace or install a water heater?

The law requires plumbing permits for water heaters because of fire, electric shock and explosion hazards.

## When do I have to hire an architect or engineer to design my project and prepare the plans?

An architect or engineer is not required for any occupancy building that has a ground area of 4,000 square feet or less and is 20 feet tall or less, for single-family dwellings, for accessory buildings to single-family dwellings, and for agricultural buildings.