

Frequently Asked Questions

Related Questions

Why should I get a permit?

A decision not to get a permit could be costly.

For example, some homeowners find when trying to sell or refinance their homes, prospective buyers or lending institutions want proof that alterations are in compliance with local codes. There is no proof without a permit and inspection on record. The homeowner must then apply for a permit with no guarantee the remodel will meet the codes, and face the possibility the remodel must be redone or removed. This could delay refinancing or cost a sale of the home.

What is the purpose of permits and codes?

Building codes give reasonable assurance a home is safe from structural failure, fire hazards from electrical and heating systems, electrical shock, and health risks. The permits provide a permanent record of the work performed and inspections conducted on the project.

What types of projects require permits?

A permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, move or demolish any commercial or residential structure. Please see our [Permit Requirements](#) page for additional details and examples of projects that do or do not require permits. These lists are not all-inclusive, so if you have any questions on whether or not a project requires a permit, please contact our office.

What information do I need to apply for a permit?

- Address and legal description of the property
- Description of the work proposed
- Owner's name, address and phone number

- Contractor's name, address, phone number, state license and CCB number.
- Contractor's **City of Troutdale business license** or **Metro business license** number
- Please note that only digital plans and documents are accepted. Please submit via the **Citizen Self-Service (CSS) portal**.

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, Oregon law requires the electrical contractor to be responsible for obtaining the permit. Electrical permits are non-transferable.

Do I need a license to do work on my own home?

No. A homeowner, who owns and occupies the house, may do any or all of the work (building, plumbing, mechanical heating and air conditioning, and electrical). This being stated, there are additional regulations that apply in some cases if you decide to do the work as the owner. For example: you are not allowed to complete electrical work on property you own if you intend to sell, rent, lease, or otherwise exchange the given property.

If you aren't sure of your abilities to do any or all of the work, we recommend you hire a licensed professional.

How do I apply for a permit?

We now accept all permit applications electronically through our online **Citizen Self-Service (CSS) portal**. If you have not previously submitted an application through the portal, you will need to create an account to do so. The account will allow you to check the status of your permit application, schedule inspections, and pay invoices.

If you have any difficulties using the portal or require ADA accommodation, please contact our office for assistance.

When are plans required for a permit?

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 where a permit isn't required.
- However, a change in use or occupancy may require plans even if there are no structural alterations.
- Please contact our office to inquire whether a permit for change in use or occupancy is required.

When do I need to hire an architect/engineer to design my project and prepare plans?

An architect or engineer is not required for:

- Any occupancy building with a ground area of 4,000 square feet or less and height of 20 feet or less.
- Single-family dwellings.
- Accessory buildings to single-family dwellings.
- Agricultural buildings.

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 taller than 20 feet.
- When the occupancy classification requires a fire- and life-safety review, regardless of the building's size.

When am I required to obtain zoning approval?

Before a permit can be issued, you're required to obtain local zoning approval for:

- Any new structure.
- Any work that increases the area or height of a structure.
- Any work that changes the use of a structure.
- Any interior or exterior work that changes the structure on a locally-adopted Historic Landmark
- Any work that changes the facade of a structure if it is located in downtown Troutdale on Historic Columbia River Highway between 257th Drive and Depot Park

- Any new sign

In some cases, obtaining zoning approval (also known as a planning sign-off or a land use approval) must occur **before** a permit application can be submitted. In other cases, zoning approval can occur after the permit application is submitted and prior to the permit being issued.

Contact **comdev [at] troutdaleoregon.gov (subject: Zoning%20Requirements%20for%20a%20Permit%20Application)** or at 503-674-7230 if you have questions on zoning requirements. Please note that a \$100 compliance review fee may be charged on certain reviews. That fee is typically assessed once your permit fees are generated when your permit is ready to be issued.

How long does it take to get a permit?

The length of time varies depending on the complexity of the project.

- If possible, permits are processed and issued over-the-counter.
- Permits may take longer to process and issue if plan review or other consultation is required before issuance.

When can I begin work on my project?

When the permit covering your scope of work is issued, work can begin.

If you've submitted plans and documents, one set of plans stamped "Approved" will be made available online once the review is completed. These approved plans and documents along with the permit are downloadable via the relevant permit summary page on your CSS account, and must be on site for all inspections. You will receive extra information and instructions on this in the email notifying you of permit issuance.

When does my permit expire?

Permits expire 180 days from the date of issuance or last inspection. If you are not ready for inspection yet and you are nearing the end of the 180 day period, you will need to submit an extension request email to the Building Division.

Do I build to the code in effect when the home was originally built?

No. The new work must be constructed under today's codes.

If I remodel my house, do I have to bring the entire home up to today's codes?

No. Only the new portion being remodeled must meet the current codes, unless the remodel creates a hazard for the existing building such as overloading an existing beam.

What if I altered my home without realizing I need a permit? Will I be subject to a fine? Do I have to tear the whole project down and start over?

Penalties can be levied for refusing to comply with the law. However, the Building Division prefers that a building conform to the code rather than punish a homeowner. If homeowners discover that they didn't get a permit when required, they don't necessarily have to tear the project down and start over.

If the alteration can meet the applicable codes, it can be approved.

City inspectors won't necessarily approve something they cannot see and may require small sections of wall or roof covering be removed to verify the construction meets the code. There can be no guarantee some changes may be needed, and some may not be easy to accomplish.

What is a "C of O" and do I need one?

A Certificate of Occupancy is a document issued to the owner of a building once all building and development conditions administered by the City have been met. The City provides a C of O for all residential new home construction, commercial new construction, commercial tenant improvement and change of use.

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