



# **BUILDING PERMIT BASICS**

**JUNEAU PERMIT CENTER, 4TH FLOOR MARINE VIEW CENTER, (907) 586-0770**

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## **WHEN DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?**

Generally, Building Permits are required for any new construction, addition or remodeling project in the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ). Limited "direct replacement" and some small structures do not require a permit but must meet minimum code requirements. Call if you have any questions.

## **WHY GET A BUILDING PERMIT?**

Besides the legal requirement of obtaining a Building Permit for most construction projects, there are a number of other reasons that this process makes sense.

1. You pay **NO SALES TAX** on many materials purchased for a construction project which has a valid building permit. This means that you will save money.
2. Building Codes are created to **PROTECT PEOPLE** from unnecessary hazards. How tragic it would be for a family member to be injured due to a small oversight.
3. Some code safeguards may not apply to you but may apply to the **NEXT OWNER** of your building. You may not want to be responsible for their tragedy.
4. Even excellent **BUILDING CONTRACTORS AND DESIGNERS ARE OFTEN NOT BUILDING CODE EXPERTS**. You cannot necessarily rely on their code knowledge as a substitute for plan review and inspection by a trained building permit staff.

The **COST OF THE BUILDING PERMIT** is calculated from a sliding scale with various steps based on the **VALUATION** of the work. The **COST FOR PLAN REVIEW** is 50% of the Building Permit fee for residential work and 65% for commercial work.

We will be glad to provide a copy of the current fee schedule and valuation table at your request or look it up for you based on your estimate of valuation. Check to see if the schedules you have are current before using them on future projects as they do change periodically.

In Juneau, unlike most cities, you will not have to obtain separate permits of Electrical and Plumbing work along with a Building Permit unless those are the only types of work you plan to do.

## **STEPS IN THE PERMIT PROCESS**

There are generally 5 steps to the Building Permit process:

- (1) APPLICATION**
- (2) PLAN REVIEW**
- (3) PERMIT ISSUANCE**
- (4) INSPECTIONS**
- (5) CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**

*The following is intended to show you the how and why of this process:*

## **(1) APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT**

1. The **APPLICATION FORM** is two parts: the Building Permit Application and the Development Permit Application. Alternately, you may apply online at [http://www.juneau.org/permits/buildperm/application\\_request.php](http://www.juneau.org/permits/buildperm/application_request.php).
2. Two (2) sets of **PLANS** of the work showing any existing buildings, location of the proposed work, the dimensions of the work, and the materials to be used in the work. Some direct replacement projects may not require plans such as reroofing, residing and some electrical or plumbing work. Call if you have a question on this.

The purpose of Plan Review is to avoid construction of something that does not meet code and must be torn out, which can be costly and time-consuming.

3. If the project involves a new structure, an addition, a change of use or remodeling involving any part of the exterior of a building, a **LAND SURVEY** showing existing structures and stamped by an Alaska registered land surveyor may be required. This is to determine that there is adequate separation between buildings and from buildings to property lines, and that additions meet setbacks.
4. If the project involves a new **ON-LOT WATER OR SEWER SYSTEM**, you will need to obtain permits from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. We will be pleased to assist you in reaching that agency.

If the project involves plan review, a **PLAN REVIEW FEE** must be paid at the time of building permit application. This is based on the "value" of the work. Value is based on labor and materials for remodels and per the fee table for additions and new construction.

## **(2) PLAN REVIEW**

Plan review is the process of determining that your proposed project meets the various codes and ordinances of the City and Borough of Juneau. These codes and ordinances were put in place to protect you and your neighbors from undesirable and unsafe types and placement of buildings in our neighborhoods.

Residential projects are usually checked by the Community Development Department (CDD) Building Division for building code compliance, General Engineering Division of the Engineering Department for water, sewer, driveways, grading and drainage, and the CDD Planning Division for zoning ordinances such as setbacks, land use restrictions and wetlands.

Commercial projects get these reviews along with Historic District Review and Fire Department Review, as appropriate.

Except for very large projects which require special review talents, the reviews are done by City staff and usually take no more than 2 weeks (can take up to 3-4 weeks in summer) unless further information is required of you to determine the intent of the plans. A staff member will contact you if more information is needed.

Three areas you should be aware of require special submittals. If your project involves a **RETAINING WALL WHICH RETAINS GROUND OVER 4 FEET HIGH**, an engineer's stamped drawing is required. If you plan to use **TRUSSES** for your roof, an engineer's stamp is required on the design. If the project uses structural concrete or steel, pilings, welding or bolting, a **SPECIAL INSPECTION PROGRAM** is required.

The Permit Center offers several programs for expediting plan review if this is needed on your project to meet your schedule:

**EARLY START AUTHORIZATION** is for projects which have already been in plan review for ten days and have all required information submitted. This only allows you to start the foundation phase of the project. An additional fee is required based on the value of the foundation work only. Review of your foundation goes to the top of the plan review list and usually only takes a day or two.

**EXPEDITED RESIDENTIAL PLAN REVIEW** is a program that allows plan review to be completed at a meeting with review staff. This program requires a complete set of plans and other submittals and a previously obtained **LAND USE INFORMATION FORM** from the CDD Planning Division. There is no extra fee for this service. It allows an applicant to obtain a permit in one visit to the Permit Center. See the handout on this process for detailed information.

**THIRD PARTY PLAN REVIEW** is another program which relies on private agency plan review. To qualify as a CBJ Third Party Plan Reviewer, the reviewer must hold a Combination Dwelling Inspector certification from ICC and pass a local certification test. CBJ will charge a lower plan review fee as most of the job will be done before the plans are submitted.

### **(3) PERMIT ISSUANCE**

When the plan review is complete, a staff member will call to inform you that your permit is ready to be issued. You may return to our office and pay the **PERMIT FEE** and any other remaining charges, if you choose; you may mail a check covering your remaining balance to us, or use a VISA/MC only over the phone. We will give or mail the following items to you:

- A. Your **BUILDING PERMIT**, which must be available at the project site at all times during construction.
- B. **SALES TAX CARD(S)** will be printed for the permit to be issued. You will need these cards to exempt sales tax for building materials for these projects.
- C. One set of your approved **PLANS** with our comments on complying with the building codes and ordinances. These plans must also be available at the project site at all times. These are needed so that the inspectors can refer to them to see what items were discovered during plan review which requires special attention.
- D. A **YELLOW POSTING NOTICE** which must be displayed in a location so that our inspectors can see it from the street to locate the work and so that we and others will know that a permit has been issued for the work.
- E. And a **COMMENT SHEET** to tell us how well we served you and how we may improve our service in the future.

#### **(4) INSPECTIONS**

1. Inspections are performed at your request by calling our **INSPECTION HOTLINE AT 586-1703**. You will need the following information before calling:
  - Building Permit Number
  - Project Address
  - Type of Inspection Requested
  - Date and Time of Inspection Requested
  - Contact Name and Phone Number

Inspections may be requested for anytime between 9:00 am and 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday except holidays. Please give us one day notice of the need for an inspection to insure we can schedule it when you want it. You may call up to 7:00 am the day you want the inspection. At that time, the recording is transcribed and the inspectors are dispatched for the day.

2. **WHEN TO CALL FOR AN INSPECTION:** Generally, before you cover anything, call for an inspection. This includes:

**EXCAVATION** after staking is complete and formwork is built

**FOUNDATIONS** after all formwork and reinforcing is in place

**WALLS, FLOORS AND ROOFS** after all structural members, plumbing and electrical are in place but before insulation or covering of the structural members with finish materials

**INSULATION** for residential projects after all required insulation is in place (transparent vapor barriers may also be applied prior to this inspection)

**FINAL** after all code related items are in place (not all trim materials are required to be finished but plumbing and electrical must be complete).

3. **THIRD PARTY INSPECTIONS** are possible under an expanded program of the Permit Center. An ICC certified Combination Dwelling Inspector with a CBJ certification may be used for selected or most inspections. A reduced permit fee will be collected for this process if most of the inspections are to be performed by the private inspection agency.

#### **(5) A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY**

A Certificate of Occupancy is required for all new residential and commercial projects and some remodeling where there is a change of use or reconfiguration of space. We often find that banks require Certificates of Occupancy to approve financing. If it is not done shortly after completion (for no additional cost), we will have to charge for an inspection before a Certificate can be issued in the future. We cannot issue a Certificate unless we have inspected the building very recently as changes may have occurred since our last inspection.

The Certificate assures the public that we have performed an inspection(s) of the building and

found it to be fit for the occupancy specified. While the City cannot economically justify full time inspection, our staff is well trained and experienced in periodic inspection. They are conscientious and professional employees who take their responsibility seriously. If you will cooperate with them, you can be assured that they will do their best to assure your building project is safe and in compliance with all current building codes and ordinances.

### **WHEN DOES MY PERMIT EXPIRE?**

Work under your Building Permit must start within 360 days of permit issuance or it will expire and a new permit must be obtained.

In order to keep your permit valid, your work must continue so that there is not a lapse of over 360 days when no on-site work is accomplished.

In order to keep the permit active and avoid a problem with an expired permit, we suggest that you call for an inspection at least every 6 months and show us your progress.

### **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS**

Please feel free to call our staff with code related questions. While the inspection staff is often in the field doing inspections, you can count on reaching someone knowledgeable in building codes as well as zoning and engineering requirements at (907) 586-0770 during normal office hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm. This is the telephone number for the Juneau Permit Center. Our fax number is (907) 586-3365. You can also email us at PERMITS@ci.juneau.ak.us.

### **YOUR COMMENTS ARE APPRECIATED!**

Please take a few moments to fill out and mail our **COMMENTS SHEET** at any time during the project. We would especially appreciate your comments at the end of the project so that we may improve our services to you and others in the future. If you have lost your sheet or need another, please ask our inspector for one or call our office and we will get one to you. Thanks for your assistance!