

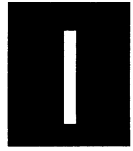
PERMITS

What gets me is you work all your life like a dog, you pay into these government programs. But still, when you need help, the people that 's paid to help you they act like it's coming out of their own pocket.

- Artie Chandler



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In general, a public agency overseeing building and land development ***is on our side***. Public agencies exist in order to protect the interests of the citizenry, and there is certainly no reason to encourage an adversarial-type relationship. The purpose of building departments and codes is to provide standards to safeguard the health, safety, and property of the community.

Remember: Cooperation with plan examiners and field inspectors is going to be more effective than confrontation and conflict.

There are three "*standard*" building codes in the United States: building codes have been developed by the International Conference of Building Officials, Building Officials and Code Administrators, and Southern Building Code Congress. ICBO's Uniform Building Code is the most widely adopted, but ***you should check with your Building Department to identify which code is applied in your area***, and where you can obtain copies of applicable codes and ordinances. As you consider where to build your home, you'll want to be sure the site conforms to local codes and ordinances **BEFORE** you purchase the lot.

When you obtain a residential Building Permit, your project may be checked to meet the requirements of the following codes and ordinances:

1. Uniform Building Code
2. Uniform Mechanical Code
3. Uniform Plumbing Code
4. National Electric Code
5. Uniform Fire Code
6. Sensitive Areas Provisions and Administrative Rules
7. Stormwater/Drainage Ordinance
8. County Zoning Code
9. Energy Code
10. Ordinances and policies adopted by your County or City.

Almost any type of construction requires a permit. Permit fees are set by the county or city, and fees are paid when application for permit is made. In order to obtain a permit for New Construction, Additions, and Remodels, you will likely provide the Building Department with the following types of information:

1. Owner's Name, Phone Number, and Mailing Address
2. Property Tax Account Number
3. Legal Description of a Legal Building Site (3 copies)
4. Site Plan (3 copies)
5. Working Drawings & Specifications (2 copies)
6. Information on Heating Systems, Fireplaces, Stoves
7. Sewer Availability Letter/Septic Design
8. Water Availability Letter/Recorded Well Covenant
9. Owner Affidavit/Contractor's Registration Number
10. Valuation for Special Site Items
11. Fire Marshal Application Receipt
12. Energy Code Compliance Form
13. Miscellaneous: For instance, Stormwater Control

Note: Electrical, Plumbing, Septic, Mechanical, and Gas permits may be issued by your Department of Labor and Industries and County Department of Public Health. Contact these agencies in your State for related information.

During construction a certain number of inspections are required as a result of the permits issued for your project. Some of the **critical** inspection points are (this varies from locale to locale):

- * before pouring concrete footings
- * before pouring concrete walls
- * after plumbing rough-in
- * after HVAC rough-in
- * after electrical rough-in
- * after framing rough-in
- * after insulation installation
- * after drywall installation
- * after laying sewer or septic lines
- * after final completion

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When a building permit is issued to you, there will be a schedule which identifies these **critical** inspection points. **Remember:** septic, electrical, plumbing, gas, and HVAC inspections are arranged by the respective Trade Contractors, but it is your responsibility (or the General Contractor) to coordinate on-site activities.

As work progresses on your project, you assume Drawings and Specifications are in compliance with code requirements because they've been "approved," and Trade Contractors are building according to these standards. **Don't make this assumption!** Architects, Designers, and Engineers strive to meet the needs of a client not public agencies. Often, these construction professionals think that if their work has code violations, the building officials will catch them during plan review. And the attitude of some Trade Contractors is based on the feeling that maybe they'll simply get away with code infractions.

So, who can you trust to provide Quality Control **BEFORE** work begins? Well, a General Contractor is tested almost exclusively on what s/he knows about code requirements. By relying on their expertise, you must be willing to pay their fee (See "*Budget Estimate*" on Pages 65-68). Another option if you choose to assume the responsibility is take a schematic design of your home to the local Building Department for a preliminary review. Call first to ask if there's a procedure for early review. If so, you can talk about how to interpret the code so mistakes can be corrected in the early stages. ***It's much easier to change your home style on paper rather than six months later under field conditions.***

As far as Architects and Trade Contractors are concerned, you should make code compliance a provision of your Contract Documents. This may seem obvious but it's rare to find an instance where an Inspector has found no corrections to be made. For instance, a framing inspection is required **AFTER** plumbing, heating, and electrical rough-in work is complete. Since many Trade Contractors are unfamiliar with where and how often joists can be notched or drilled (and an Architect will disclaim all responsibility), the Inspector wants the opportunity to review how rough-in work has affected structural integrity. Often, miscut holes or notches can be repaired, but sometimes a serious mistake may call for an Engineer to create a design solution.

Inspections are necessary to enforce provisions of the code and ensure code compliance. If there's a problem with your project, a "*Correction Notice*" will be issued identifying the problem and the action to be taken to comply with code requirements. ***The work will be re-inspected!*** You'll want to discuss the problem with the Field Inspector, and hold the Trade Contractor who completed the work responsible for the correction.

Whether you're dealing with an Field Inspector or Trade Contractor, problems encountered during the Design/Build process may place individuals into **CONFLICT**. Conflict situations usually originate when an individual is frustrated, or feels about to be frustrated, in the pursuit of an important goal. The Owner should accept the probability that conflicts will emerge and anticipate ways to resolve problems.

The most straightforward approach to resolving conflict is to attempt to identify the exact nature of the problem, consider possible alternative solutions, and select the solution that is most reasonable when both parties are willing to work together. However, individuals are often placed in situations in which they experience considerable anxiety and often resort to aggressive defense mechanisms in order to get their way. This type of behavior is the least effective when communicating with a Field Inspector or Trade Contractor.

Compromise defense mechanisms allow individuals to make relatively satisfactory adjustments to less than desirable situations. The process by which change comes about and conflicts are solved rests squarely on communication. The Owner wants the project to remain on schedule and in budget so one must be prepared to contend with difficulties surfacing during inspection of Trade Contractor's work by remaining in a problem solving mode.

After your final inspection a "*Certificate of Occupancy*" will be issued. Sometimes this is a formal certificate but often the original permit with all signatures may become this document. Not all signatures appear on the original permit issued by the Building Department. The septic, plumbing, electrical, gas, and HVAC permits may be separate documents, and you'll want to retain these copies as well as the building permit. ***Keeping these signed copies for your records is essential as evidence that your project has complied with all codes and ordinances.***