



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
BUILDING DIVISION

EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/20/2010

1. **Q.** *Why do I need a permit?*
A. The Florida Building Code states that the “code is to establish the minimum requirements to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare through structural strength.... And to provide safety to fire fighters and emergency responders during emergency operations”.
2. **Q.** *When is a permit required?*
A. A permit shall apply to the construction, erection, alteration, modification, repair, equipment, use and occupancy, location, maintenance, removal and demolition of every public and private building, structure or appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings, structures.
3. **Q.** *How much will my permit cost?*
A. The cost of a permit varies depending on the permit type. Building permit fees are determined by the valuation of the project in most instances. The fee schedule is available on the City website at www.cwgdh.com under the “online forms” tab.
4. **Q.** *What happens if I choose not to obtain the required permits?*
A. The Building Official will issue a notice to obtain a permit. Once a permit is applied for the cost will be triple the fee for an after the fact permit. If no action is taken, a notice of violation will be issued and could result in fines being levied.
5. **Q.** *Do I need a contractor?*
A. Not if you own and occupy the house. Florida statutes allow the owners of real property to act as their own contractor. This exemption may only be used if you own and occupy the home. As an owner builder though, if you do not complete all of the work yourself, you must supervise the work, and hire licensed trade subcontractors (electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and roof) in accordance with state law.
6. **Q.** *If I use a contractor, what should I know to choose one?*
A. Ask for and check references. Ask to see their state license. Check the number on the state web side (www.myflorida.com) for any complaints filed with the state. Also ask for a copy of their workers compensation and general liability insurance. If they ask you to pull the permit, “beware”, they may not be licensed, which puts the homeowner totally at risk.
7. **Q.** *How long does it take to get a permit?*
A. Depending on the workload, and that all required documents are provided, a building permit can be obtained within ten (10) workdays. Minor projects are normally approved, or additional information requests can be issued within five (5) workdays. The time may be shorter if all required documentation is submitted correctly.
8. **Q.** *What happens after the permit is issued?*
A. The list of required inspections is located on the permit placard. Instructions on scheduling these inspections will be provided when a permit is issued. It is the applicants (Owner

- Builder/Contractor) responsibility to ensure that all required inspections are made prior to proceeding with work on the project. For new residential & commercial buildings, once all fees are paid and all required inspections are completed, the Owner/Contractor will be issued a CO (Certificate of Occupancy). Upon request a COC (Certificate of Completion) for smaller projects can be given.
9. **Q.** *How much time do I have once the permit is issued?*
A. Permits expire and become null and void if work is not started and an inspection requested within 180 days from the issuance date of the permit. After work has begun the permit will expire when work is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days. Lack of an approved inspection within this time will serve as validation that the job has been suspended or abandoned. Approved inspections will extend the permit six (6) months. An extension may be granted if a written request is submitted to the Building Division for review.
10. **Q.** *Where is the Permitting office located?*
A. In the Winter Garden City Hall 1st floor, located at 300 W. Plant Street, Winter Garden, FL 34747.
11. **Q.** *What Do I need in order to obtain a permit?*
A. A construction drawing or plans must be submitted with a complete application. These construction drawings or plans must show all proposed work and details of compliance to building codes and zoning ordinances for most residential projects. Plans that are incomplete will be returned.
12. **Q.** *When may I start building?*
A. No construction is allowed until the permit is issued. Once the permit application and accompanying plans have been submitted, following approval of the plan and payment of fees, the permit may be picked up at the building division in downtown City Hall (300 W. Plant St.). A special request in writing for permission to start early may be submitted to the Building Official on a case by case basis.
13. **Q.** *When do I need inspections?*
A. The type and number of inspections depends on the project.
14. **Q.** *Can I change my mind about the way something looks or is done?*
A. If a change is desired to a project, a revised set of plans must be submitted to the building division that clearly shows the revisions in relationship to the approved plans. The revisions must be approved by the building division Plans Examiner and an approved copy must also be available on the site prior to the next inspection.
15. **Q.** *How long is a permit active?*
A. Once a permit is issued; construction must begin within 180 days. If this time period is passed, the permit will automatically expire and an extension must be requested in writing.
16. **Q.** *Does the City require an approval letter from a condominium or homeowners association?*
A. The City does not require an approval letter from a condominium or homeowners association. This does not relieve the requirement for HOA approval.
17. **Q.** *What types of exterior projects require a permit?*
A. Permits are required for exterior projects, such as a new addition, swimming pools, fences, decks, bay window, screened porches/stoops, and hot tubs. All exterior construction projects that require the issuance of a building permit must also meet certain zoning requirements related to height and setback distance. A sediment control or silt fence may also be required if the area under construction is adjacent to a wetland or conservation area.
18. **Q.** *What types of interior projects require a building permit?*

- A.** Permits are required for interior projects including, but not limited to, new interior walls, removal o interior structural bearing walls, finished basements, finished attics, and new bathrooms. If you have a question call the building division at 407-877-5144.
- 19. Q.** *Is a permit required to install a heat pump or air-conditioning unit?*
- A.** A mechanical permit is required to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace a mechanical heating, ventilating and air-conditioning system. This includes, but is not limited to, furnaces, heat pumps, and duct work.
- 20. Q.** *Is a permit required to install a new outlet, ceiling fan, or lighting fixture?*
- A.** An electrical permit must be obtained prior to commencement of any new or added electrical work. It is best to obtain a permit if the work will be valued over \$100.00.
- 21. Q.** *Is a permit required to install a new sink, toilet or hot water heater?*
- A.** A plumbing permit must be obtained prior to commencement of all new plumbing work and most replacement projects. Replacement of an existing sink or toilet, for example, does not require a permit providing that no modification to the water or sewer connections is made.
- 22. Q.** *Is a permit required to do emergency electrical or plumbing work?*
- A.** A licensed electrician or plumber may undertake emergency work to rectify an immediate health or hazardous conditions without obtaining prior approval. On the next business day following the repair a permit must be obtained.