

What You Should Know About Building Permits

A guide to understanding and making an application for a building permit

Building Permits - what are they? They are for your protection.

- A building permit is your legal permission to begin construction, demolition or change the use of a building or part of a building.
- It means that the Building Standards Department for the Municipality has reviewed the plans for any new structure, addition, renovation or change of use and that the proposed construction/demolition, renovation and/or change of use, complies with the requirements of the Zoning By-Law for setbacks, lot coverage, use, etc., any other applicable laws and/or regulations and the Ontario Building Code.
- Building permits regulate the types of construction allowed in the community and ensures that building standards are met.
- **The building permit process protects each homeowner's interests, as well as those of the community at large and provides for the construction of safe structures.**
- Building permits help ensure that any structural changes are safe, legal and sound.
- In some cases, an agent for the owner and/or contractor will obtain the necessary building permit(s) on your behalf. **However, it is the owner of the property who is ultimately responsible to obtain the necessary clearances from the authorities having jurisdiction and to obtain the necessary building permit(s) and complying with the technical requirements of the building code.**

When do you need a Building Permit?

You are required to obtain a Building Permit if you plan any of the following:

- Construct a new building/structure that is greater than 10 square metres (108 square feet) in size.
- Construct an addition which is attached to a existing building/structure regardless of the size and/or the square footage of the addition.
- Install a sunroom on to a house.
- Renovate, repair or add on to a existing building/structure.
- Demolish or remove all or a portion of a building/structure.
- Change the "use" of the building.
- Install, change, remove or move portions of a load-bearing wall.
- Install, change, remove or move a load-bearing beam.
- Install exterior cladding - siding, brick veneer, etc.
- Install a door between an attached garage and house.
- Install a door between an attached garage and the basement of a house.
- Install an exterior stair case to provide access to the basement from the exterior of the building.

- Install new openings in load-bearing walls, exterior walls or change the size of doors and windows openings.
- Install a skylight in the roof of a building/structure.
- Construct a wood deck greater than 600 mm (23-5/8 inches) in height above average ground level.
- Construct a wood deck around a privately owned outdoor swimming pool greater than 600 mm (23 5/8 inches) in height above average ground level.
- Install a roof over a wood deck.
- Excavate a basement or construct a foundation.
- Install or modify a heating system, air-conditioning system or fireplaces/wood-stoves and includes the installation of a chimney.
- Install, renovate and/or modify plumbing fixtures and/or plumbing systems.
- Construct, renovate or repair a sewage system, septic tank and/or septic field.
- Install a wood stove, fireplace and/or install a fireplace insert.
- Construct or repair a chimney.
- Install a bedroom, convert an existing room into a bedroom.
- Install plumbing fixtures to an existing building/structure that is serviced by a septic system.
- Install a pre-fabricated building/structure, which is greater than 10 square metres (108 square feet) in size.
- Convert an attached garage into habitable space.

Building Permit Application Requirements

The following is a list of documentation required to be submitted at the time of application for residential building permits:

Application Forms:

- Application for a Permit to Construct or Demolish
 - On the form as set out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
 - Complete with Schedule 1: Designer information
- Application for new Septic System
 - On the form as set out by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)
 - Complete with Schedule 2: Designer information
- Property Entrance Application
 - From Town, County or MTO
- Declaration of Applicant for Building Permit
 - Tarion Warranty Corporation (Ontario New Home Warranty Program)

Drawings and Documentation:

- Commercial/Industrial/Multi Residential: five (5) sets to be submitted, one (1) will be returned with the permit
- Single Family Residential: three (3) sets to be submitted, one (1) will be returned with the permit
- Second Suites Residential: four (4) sets to be submitted, one (1) will be returned with the permit
- All dimensions must be legible.

1. Site Drawings:

1.1 Site Plan

- **Drawn to scale (1/4" = 4'-0" or 1:200) and fully dimensioned.**
- Property Lines and lot area referenced to a current survey.
- Location and foot print area of all existing buildings/structures including pools, decks, porches and private sewage system.
- Clear indication of proposed new construction with proposed foot print area.

- *Distance (setbacks) from property lines (front, side, rear) for all proposed and existing buildings/structures including private sewage system.*
- Location of proposed and/or existing private well (if applicable).
- Location of proposed and/or existing private sewage system (if applicable – include distance to neighboring wells).
- Include a North arrow.
- Address for property.
- Location and design/layout of proposed and/or existing driveway.

1.2 Lot Grading

- **Drawn to scale (1/4" = 4'-0" or 1:200) and fully dimensioned.**
- Property Lines and Lot area referenced to a current survey.
- Clear indication of where the proposed new construction will be located on the parcel of land.
- Clear indication of where existing vegetation, topsoil will be removed regarding all earth works pertaining to the new construction including driveway and utility trenches (gas, hydro, etc.).
- Show top of foundation wall elevation.
- Show existing and proposed elevations at lot corners and grade changes.
- Show driveway location and percent grades on driveway.
- Show direction of surface drainage direction flow.
- Show location and grade of swales (minimum 2 percent).
- Show location of patios, decks or porches.
- Show location and elevations of retaining wall (if applicable).
- Show proposed ground elevations adjacent to the buildings/structures at all corners of the building/structure. These elevations must be minimum of 152 millimetres (6 inches) lower than top of foundation wall elevation.
- Show the proposed location of the private sanitary sewage disposal system to serve the building/structure (if applicable).
- Show surface drainage will be directed away from the foundation of the building/structure.
- Show surface drainage will not be directed and/or altered to impact on all abutting properties.
- Clear Indication of program for erosion control and sedimentation control during construction.

2. Building Drawings:

2.1 Floor Plan (for each level of the proposed structure)

- **Drawn to scale (1/4" = 1'-0" or 1:50) and fully dimensioned.**
- Indicate use of each space.
- Size and span of all structural components.
- Location and type of all plumbing fixtures.
- Location of all fireplaces and fuel source (gas, wood).
- Location of all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Label all lintels/headers for wall openings.
- Accesses to crawlspaces and attics.
- Ventilation of bathrooms, roof spaces and crawl spaces.

2.2 Sections (cross sections and wall sections)

- **Drawn to scale (1/2" = 1'-0" or 1:20) and fully dimensioned.**
- Construction of all elements/assemblies, wall, ceiling/roof, floor.
- Height of rooms.
- Head clearance at stairs, etc.

- Backfill heights.
 - Details for stairs, landings, handrails and guards (material, height, sizes).
 - Location, material, thickness and R (RSI) value of insulation, vapour barriers.
 - Details of stepped footings.
- 2.3 Elevations
- **Drawn to scale (1/4" = 1'-0" or 1:50) and fully dimensioned.**
 - Show overall height of building.
 - Indicate materials used for cladding (brick, stucco, shingles).
 - Depth of footings.
 - Slope of roof.
 - Percentage of unprotected openings and exposing building face.
 - Window and door sizes and locations.
- 2.4 Construction Details
- **Drawn to scale (as applicable) and fully dimensioned.**
 - Guard details.
 - Fireplace and chimney details.
 - Engineered Truss layout/drawings, stamped with P.Eng seal.
 - Engineered Floor joist layout/plan (if applicable).
 - Heat loss/gain calculations and duct layout/design.

Applicable Law:

All 'Applicable Law', as defined in the Ontario Building Code, must be met including, but not limited to:

- Planning Approval
- Engineering Approval
- Public Works Approval
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Approval
- Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Approval
- Ministry of the Environment (MOE) Approval
- Conservation Authority
 - *Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority*
120 Bayview Parkway, Box 282, Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X1
Phone: 905.895.1281 / 1.800.465.0437
 - *Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA)*
John Hix Conservation Administration Centre,
8195 8th Line, Utopia, ON L0M 1T0
Phone: (705) 424-1479 Fax: (705) 424-2115
- Heritage Act

Fees:

- All application submissions will be submitted with a minimum deposit set out in the Building By-Law 2019 - 174.
- Permit Fees (Building, Septic, Demolition, etc.) as stated in fee schedule within the Building Permit By-Law, will be paid upon permit issuance (less the deposit).
- Development Fees (Municipal, County, Education), when applicable, are paid upon permit issuance.
- Fire Services Fees, when applicable, are paid upon permit issuance.
- Security deposits, when applicable, are paid at the time of application submission.

Designer Requirements:

- Building Officials are not responsible for doing the design for your project; the members of the Building Department can review your drawings but **are not allowed to design for you**.
- A homeowner may choose to design his/her own project as long as they feel capable of doing so. The plans submitted by the homeowner must meet all criteria as set out above and must demonstrate compliance with the Ontario Building Code.
- If a homeowner chooses to have his/her project designed by another individual, that individual must either have a Building Code Identification Number (BCIN) and be qualified in the appropriate categories of qualification to design for the project or be a registered Architect or Engineer.
- Drawings prepared by an Architect or an Engineer must include their seal and signature.
- **All drawings done by a designer must include the designer's information with their registration, qualification and design responsibility.** Designers may use the template below to provide the required information on the drawings.

The undersigned has reviewed and takes responsibility for this design, and has the qualifications and meets the requirements set out in the Ontario Building Code to be a designer.

Qualification Information

Required unless design exempt under Div. C Part 3, 3.2.5.1. of the Building Code.

Name

Signature

BCIN

Registration Information

Required unless design is exempt under Div. C Part 3, 3.2.4.1. of the Building Code.

Firm Name

BCIN

Submission

- Application to be completed by the owner/designated agent to the best of his/her ability.
- If a tenant or agent or any individual other than the registered owner of the property submits an application, that person shall submit a written letter from the registered owner of the property, giving consent for the proposed construction.
- **All applications must be submitted with all required supporting documentation (as described above) or they will not be processed and will be returned.**
- You can make an application for any type of permit during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Municipal Office which is located at 10 Wellington Street East in Alliston.

Review Period & Permit Issuance

- The application timeline, as set out in the Ontario Building Code, will begin when an application is deemed complete. A "complete application" includes applicable law approvals. (See above for "applicable law" examples)
- Once the plans review process is complete and approved by a Building Inspector, the applicant will be contacted and any outstanding fees will be required to be paid before the permit is issued.
- At the time of permit issuance, the applicant will receive:

1. **A permit card** stating your permit number, owner name, and project location. In addition, a listing of the inspections required for your specific project. This card is to be displayed in a visible location on site to indicate that a permit has been issued for the project.
2. **A copy of all the approved drawings** stamped "Site/Field Copy of Reviewed Drawings". These documents **MUST** be on site for review by the inspector at the time of the inspections.

Inspections

- Inspections are required at various stages of construction.
- It is the responsibility of the homeowner to arrange for inspections (or ensure that his/her contractor does so).
- Inspections can be booked by contacting one of the Building Permit Coordinators.
- A minimum of 48 hours notice is required for all inspections.
- When requesting an inspection please ensure to have the following information:
 - Your name and/or the owner's name that appears on the permit card
 - The permit number
 - The project location
 - The type of inspection that is required
- Please note that an occupancy inspection is not always a final inspection.

Tips

1. The more information you provide in your submission, the less questions we will have.
2. **Contact the Planning Department before your submission** regarding zoning and setback requirements to ensure they will approve your proposal. This will save you time from having to re-submit your drawings (which can take up to 7 business days for approval).
3. **Contact the Engineering Department before your submission** regarding any grade changes that may occur during your construction. The Engineering Department may want a grading plan, depending on your project and/or a statement on your site plan saying you will maintain the existing grade.
4. The most common issues that may prolong the building permit process are:
 - Incomplete applications
 - Missing details on the drawings
 - Issues with Planning/Zoning requiring further applications (Committee of Adjustment, etc.)
5. **Construction, alteration and/or demolition cannot start until a building permit is issued. Starting construction without a permit is illegal and a Provincial Offence under the Ontario Building Code Act.**
6. If you should commence construction/demolition and/or change the use of a building/structure without obtaining the necessary permit(s), you may be asked to halt construction, asked to obtain the services of a qualified structural engineer (at your own expense) to review the construction, asked to uncover (at your own expense) any structural components and/or mechanical systems, asked not to cover any structural components and or mechanical systems, asked (at your own expense) to provide additional information and/or testing.
7. Any applications for renovations, additions or alterations to structures serviced by a septic system must be accompanied by the septic layout and/or design.