

Also, check with your local planning or zoning department to determine if a permit for change in use or occupancy is required.

### What technical information do I need to submit with my plans?

For most simple projects, only a completed application is required. For more complex projects, you may be required to submit some or all of the following, depending on the type of permit:

- plot map
- floor plans
- specifications
- elevations
- mechanical, plumbing, and electrical drawings
- foundation plan
- energy documentation
- structural calculations
- required fire-protection equipment

### Can a permit be issued before the plan review is approved?

No. All plans must be approved before permits are issued, unless you get special permission from the local building department for:

- A partial permit for footing only
- A partial permit for foundation and footing only

#### State of Oregon offices

Building Codes Division (toll-free) ..... 800-442-7457  
or ..... 503-378-4133  
Construction Contractors Board ..... 503-378-4621  
Better Business Bureau ..... 503-226-3981

#### Attorney General's Consumer Hotline

Portland ..... 503-229-5576  
Salem ..... 503-378-4320  
Toll-free ..... 877-877-9392

# Commonly asked questions about obtaining permits



**PermitsProtect.info**

Safe Homes. Secure Investments. Smart Communities.



#### Building Codes Division

1535 Edgewater St. NW  
P.O. Box 14470  
Salem, OR 97309-0404



# Commonly Asked Questions About Obtaining Permits

## When am I required to get a permit?

Permits are required for any new construction or alterations and additions to existing buildings.

### This includes:

- Electrical
- Manufactured home
- Elevator work
- Structural (Building)
- Plumbing
- Mechanical
- Boiler

Check out [PermitsProtect.info](#) for a basic list of what does and does not require a permit. Also, contact your local building department to find out the details on their permitting requirements.

## Why do I have to buy a permit to build on my own property?

It is all about safety. Oregon law requires you to obtain permits, even on your own property. This ensures that you meet minimum building standards for your safety and the safety of future property owners and occupants.

## Who is responsible for obtaining permits?

If the property owner is doing the work, he or she is responsible for acquiring all the permits. If you are hiring a contractor to complete the work, you need to confirm that he or she is obtaining the appropriate permits.

## How do I get a construction permit?

To get a construction permit, you must complete a permit application. Permit applications are available from the local building department in your area. Some local building departments have permit applications available online. Check out the Local Building Department Directory at [buildingpermits.oregon.gov](#) for this information.

## When am I required to obtain local zoning approval?

- When your project is a new structure
- When your project increases the area or height of a structure
- When your project changes the use of a structure

Also, depending on the project, you may be required to obtain local zoning approval for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work before a permit is issued. Some jurisdictions require a site plan for air conditioner/heat pump location. Check with your local building and zoning departments for specific requirements pertaining to your project.

## Where do I get permits?

Go to [buildingpermits.oregon.gov](#) and use the Local Building Department Directory to identify who is responsible for your property's permits. This directory has the address and phone number of Oregon building departments. Call or visit the building department's office to obtain your permits.

## Can I get a permit by mail or Web?

Yes, but it depends on your local building department.

### When seeking a permit through the mail, be sure to include, your:

- Name
- Phone number
- Mailing address
- Job location
- Type of permit application you need

### When seeking a permit application via the Web:

- Use the Local Building Department Directory at [buildingpermits.oregon.gov](#) to locate your building department and see if it supplies permit applications online.

## How long will it take to get a permit through the mail?

It depends on the project. Your local building department will issue your permit when it receives all of the information required on the application.

## How do I calculate permit fees?

Contact your local building department for fee schedules and the valuation tables for your area.

## When does my permit expire?

Your permit expires:

- If work isn't started within 180 days from the date of issue or
- If work is suspended or abandoned for 180 days or more

If you cannot begin or complete the permitted work within a 180-day period, you may submit a written request to extend your permit for an additional 180-day period.

## Why do I need a plumbing permit to replace a water heater?

Oregon law requires plumbing permits for water heaters because of fire, electric shock, and explosion dangers.

## Do I have to hire an architect or engineer to design my project and prepare the plans?

**Not usually.** You must hire an architect or engineer only when the design or methods used in the construction, alteration, or repair of the structure do not follow the process stated in the most current Oregon Residential Specialty Code.

## When are plans required?

Plans are required when:

- Your project is a new structure
- Your project increases the area or height of a structure
- Possibly, when your project changes the use of a structure