

# Homeowner's Guide to Building Permit Process

PDS

Department Application

#400

## Licensing Issues

Homeowners are exempt from the State of Idaho requirement to register as a contractor if they perform the work on their own house and do not intend to sell the property within 12 months. Homeowners performing their own work must sign a declaration that they are the homeowner when they take out a permit.

Homeowners may perform electrical and plumbing work on their own house without registering as a contractor. If acting as your own sub-contractor, you must take out permits for the work and physically perform the work yourself. If you are not doing all of the work yourself (such as the electrical or plumbing work) the person performing the work must be a State of Idaho registered and licensed contractor in that trade.

## Required Permits

### Work Requiring a Building Permit

- Build a one or two family dwelling
- Build, demolish or add a room, garage or shed, carport or other attached structure
- Build, demolish or move any detached garage or shed that is more than 200 feet in area
- Finish an attic, garage or basement to create living space
- Cut new window or door opening, widen or reduce the size of existing openings
- Move, remove or add walls
- Re-roof an existing structure
- Build a retaining wall that is measured 4 feet high or more from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall
- Build a deck more than 12 inches high
- Put up a fence more than six feet high
- Enclose a patio cover, carport or porch

- Add or enlarge a porch cover, patio cover or other attached roofed area
- Pour sidewalks slabs, and driveways more than 24 inches above adjacent grade or any story or basement

### Work Requiring a Mechanical Permit

- Install or change any part of a heating or cooling system which has ductwork or must be vented to any kind of chimney or vent
- Install a wood stove or fireplace insert
- Install, alter or repair gas piping between meter and an appliance (indoor or outdoors)
- Install a fuel oil tank
- Install or replace a gas water heater
- Exhaust bath fans or dryer vents

### Work Requiring an Electrical Permit

**Note:** You must be the owner of the dwelling (single family or duplex) in order to do Electrical work yourself.

- Install, change or repair any hard wired electrical system
- Run any additional wiring, put in an additional electrical outlet or light fixture or change out your fuse box to circuit breakers.
- Adding an outlet or switch in any room

### Work Requiring a Plumbing Permit

- Repair, replace, relocate or add to the piping system within your home
- Install new plumbing fixtures such as toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, dishwashers, etc.
- Install or replace an electric water heater
- Replace existing fixtures if concealed plumbing is required
- Replumbing pipes

[www.cityofboise.org/pds](http://www.cityofboise.org/pds)

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. I am adding a small patio cover to my house. Do I need a building permit?**

A. Yes. There will be added weight transferred to the exterior wall of the dwelling. The framing of the structure should be checked for allowable spans for beams, rafters and support posts and beams and supporting columns which may require concrete footings for frost protection. There is also the need to verify the design to provide wind stability. (lateral loading)

### **Q. I want to construct a small garden shed in my backyard. Do I need permits?**

A. We don't require a building permit as long as the structure is 200 square feet or less. However, if the structure is over 120 square feet and less than 200 square feet, you must obtain Planning approval. Planning & Zoning regulates property line setbacks and the proximity to other structures on the same lot.

### **Q. At what point do I need a foundation for a building on my property?**

A. A structure that is over 400 square feet requires a foundation to frost depth. Boise's frost depth is twenty four inches (24") below grade.

### **Q. Do I need a permit if I am remodeling my kitchen, bathroom, or other work on the interior of my home?**

A. The building code exempts a lot of work in the dwelling as far as painting, floor covering, cabinets, counter tops, wall coverings and the like. Once the project includes the removal of wall coverings to expose the framing members; a wall or partition whether bearing or non bearing; the relocation of sinks, tubs, showers, water closets and the plumbing for same, a building permit is required.

### **Q. Are there other permits that might be required even if I don't need a building permit?**

- Plumbing permits are required for most bathroom remodels when fixtures are replaced.
- Electrical permits are required when electrical fixtures are added (such as the smoke alarms that are required when a building permit is required).
- Mechanical permits are required when vents and ducts are added, replaced or relocated. This includes dryer vents, range hood vents and extending heating ducts, adding registers and replacing furnaces and air conditioning units.

### **Q. Do I need a building permit for a fence?**

A. Planning & Zoning requires fence permits for all fences. Fences over six feet (6'-0") high require a building permit.

### **Q. Do I need a permit for a concrete patio or wood deck?**

A. A building permit is required when the wooden deck or concrete patio is more than twelve inches (12") above grade.

### **Q. My house is in a historic district. Do I need any special building permits?**

A. The building permit requirements are the same as a non-historic district. However, you'll need a Certificate of Appropriateness from our Historic Preservation division for many types of work, including windows, siding and tree removal. The Certificate must be obtained prior to applying for a building permit and/or starting any work.

### **Q. Do I need a building permit for a driveway?**

A. We do not require building permits for driveways, but you do need Planning & Zoning approval.

### **Q. Do I need to get an Erosion & Sediment Control (ESC) permit if I'm just working in my backyard?**

A. We require an ESC permit whenever 5 cubic yards or more of earth is disturbed. Homeowners are exempt from the ESC Plan Designer and Responsible Person licensing requirement.

### **Q: Do I need a building permit for stand alone pergolas, gazebos, etc? Are there any restrictions on the height of these structures?**

- A building permit is required for stand alone structures that exceed 200 square feet in area. Typically, gazebo/ pergola type structures are not of typical "light frame construction" and are treated as pole construction projects that required structural engineering done by an engineer licensed in the state of Idaho.
- Accessory structures can not be over 22 feet in height.

### **Q. Do I need an electrical permit to put in outdoor lighting?**

A. No permit is required if the outdoor lighting is low voltage. A permit is required for 110 volt.