



## Do I Need A Building Permit?

***Protect Your Home. Protect Your Family.***



**T**he purpose of every permit is to protect what you value most – your family and your home. Faulty installations can cause house fires, flood damage and structural instability. But permits and inspections help protect your loved ones from these potentially deadly mistakes. Permits also help you avoid costly repairs down the line and preserve your biggest financial investment – your home. When selling your home, you may be required to fully disclose all remodeling work and whether or not permits were obtained. With permits and inspections, you can expect a smoother closing process, free of last-minute hassles, inspections and repair work if the home isn't up to code. ***So insist on permits.***

### When do I need a permit for building work?

A permit **is required** to construct, enlarge, alter, move or demolish any dwelling or related structure. Some examples:

- add a room
- build, demolish, or move a carport, garage, or shed of more than 200 square feet
- finish an attic, garage, or basement to make additional living space
- cut a new window or door opening, or widen existing openings
- move, remove, or add walls
- apply roofing when all of the old roofing is removed and new sheathing is installed
- build a stairway
- build a retaining wall
- build a deck

### What building work can I do without a permit?

You **do not need** a permit to do the following types of minor repairs and maintenance:

- paint the outside of your house
- put up storm windows
- install window awnings that are supported by an exterior wall and do not project beyond the property line
- replace interior wall, floor, or ceiling covering, such as wallboard or sheet vinyl
- put up shelving and cabinets
- install gutters and downspouts (an alteration of land permit may still be required for stormwater disposal)

#### *When buying a product or contracting a service:*

- ✓ **Call the Better Business Bureau.**
- ✓ **Talk to other consumers.**
- ✓ **Compare prices.**
- ✓ **Ask for references and contact them.**
- ✓ **Be sure you have a written contract and read it carefully before signing.**

### Where do I get a permit for building work?

Permits are issued at the Building & Planning Department Permit Center. If a contractor is doing the work, they can apply for the permit and ensure that required inspections are done. Fees are based on the size and complexity of the job. You will need to pay the permit fee when your permit is issued.

### Who must review my project?

Our Engineering and Building Code Officials will review your plans to ensure the proposed project meets the requirements of the UCC and Township Ordinances. If additional information or changes are necessary, you will be contacted and asked to furnish the information.

### How long does it take to get a permit?

A plan review generally takes up to two weeks for one- and two-family dwellings. Time frames can change, depending on the complexity of the project and the completeness of the information you submit with your application. When your plans have been reviewed, stamped **“approved”** and signed, one set will be returned to you with your permit.

## When can work start?

When your permit has been issued and one set of your **approved** plans returned, work can begin. The permit and plans must be on the job site and available to the inspector. To change your plans from what was originally approved, you must show the changes on two additional sets of plans and bring them back to the Building & Planning Department for approval.

## How do I get an inspection?

If you are having the work done by a contractor, the contractor is required to notify the Building & Planning Department when the work is ready to be inspected. If you are doing your own work, you can call to schedule the inspection. (if you have installed water piping, the work must be operational for inspection and inspectors may require that drainage piping be plugged and filled with water for inspection). When you call, you will be asked for the permit number, homeowner's name, project address, type of inspection needed, and the date on which inspection is desired.

## What's Next?

Ready to make application for a building permit? [Click here](#). You can complete and submit the application online through [PermitCenter@bensalem-township.org](mailto:PermitCenter@bensalem-township.org). Be sure to check out the general information for requirements and attach the necessary documents along with the applications. We can accept plans up to 11" x 17". Once your paperwork has been submitted, it will be begin processing through review, approval and ultimately the issued permits. If you submit an incomplete application or are missing any required documents, the Township's Permit Clerk will notify you and your application will be held until everything is in house.

This is provided as general information. Please call the Building & Planning Department at 215-633-3644 for specific information on permits and inspections or if you are unsure if you need a permit.