



Town of Paradise

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Building Division Frequently Asked Questions

What are permits and why do I need one?

Permits are the way the State of California through the Town of Paradise regulates construction. There are several different types of permits, based on the type of construction:

- Building Permit: New construction, additions, alterations, spas, gazebos, patio covers, decks, house moves, most retaining walls, or repairs to either residential or non-residential structures.
- Electrical Permit: New installations, additions, extensions, alterations, changes, and fire and accident repairs of any electrical wiring and electrical equipment associated with a structure or project.
- Plumbing Permit: New installation, removal, alteration, repair, or replacement of any plumbing, gas, or drainage piping work, or any fixture or water heater or treating equipment in a building or premise.
- Mechanical Permit: New installations; alterations; repair; replacement; remodel; and/or removal of duct work, heating, venting, or air conditioning equipment (HVAC).
- Re-roof Permit: Re-roofing requires the replacement of any dry rot or fungus-damaged wood and the replacement with new minimum Class A roofing.
- Demolition Permit: The complete demolition of an existing structure. (This permit is required to remove a structure from the property tax roles.)

Some examples of projects requiring permits are as follows:

- Covered Patios
- Room additions
- Heaters/Air Conditioners
- Fire Place Inserts
- Swimming Pools
- Any and all electrical work
- Spas
- Water Heater Replacement
- Free Standing Decks (Greater than 30')
- Re-Roofs
- Any and all plumbing work

When is a permit not needed?

Most major projects will require permits of some kind (building permits and/or planning permits). This is necessary to ensure that all buildings meet minimum standards which protect its

occupants and neighbors in everyday living and in the case of emergencies or natural disasters. Some minor projects are allowed without obtaining building permits. However, depending upon the project, other permits (planning permits, encroachment permits, special activities permits, etc.) may be required. In either case, the construction of such projects should be in conformance with all applicable codes. Some of the projects which do not require a building permit are:

- Retaining walls or planter boxes which are no more than 4' in height (measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall) and do not support another structure, fence, or take on additional loads.
- Wood or chain link fences not greater than 6' high.
- Decks and platforms less than 200 square feet and less than 30" above grade and not attached to a structure.
- Exterior stairs that are within 30" of grade, have less than four risers (if residential) or less than two risers (if non-residential), and are not a part of an exiting system.
- Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
- Single story detached buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, etc., as long as the structure does not exceed 120 square feet, is not within any setbacks, does not have any plumbing or electricity.

Minor improvements typically not needing a permit:

- Interior or exterior painting.
- Installing draperies or blinds.
- Installing carpeting or resilient floor covering.
- Building store fixtures (display cases) and removable partitions under 5 feet 9 inches.
- Building uncovered concrete patios,
- Changing fixtures and utility outlets, such as lighting and light switches.

These examples are only some of the exempted projects which are listed in various code books. Not all exempted projects have been included. Please see "Work that is Exempt from Permits" handout and contact the Building Department for additional information.

What happens if I build without a permit?

If you begin construction without the required permit(s), a *Stop Work Order* can be issued by an Inspector. You will be required to apply for the permit(s) and pay fees (double the amount of the original fee). After the permit has been properly issued, you will then be required to uncover any work which has been covered so that it may be inspected prior to the release of the *Stop Work Order*. In some cases, regulations or codes may not permit the type of construction that has been done. In this case, you may be required to replace or restore the area to its original condition prior to your construction.

How and where do I get a permit?

Permits are issued by the Community Development Services department counter which is located in Town of Paradise Town Hall located at 5555 Skyway. On some simple jobs, a permit can be obtained during the first visit. In some circumstances, more time will be needed to review the plans in detail prior to issuing any permits.

A minimum of three complete sets of plans (minimum 11”X17”) are required to obtain permits for most projects. Four sets are needed for Commercial projects or projects which require other permits. Please note it is acceptable if one set of plans consists only of: a site plan, floor plan, and elevations. Staff at the Permit Counter can assist you with the requirements for your specific project. In general, however, a complete set includes two sets of energy calculations, truss calculations, and structural calculations (but is not necessarily limited to):

- Plot Plan - showing the position of the proposed project in relation to existing buildings, property lines, septic systems and any easements.
- Foundation Plan - indicating the type, size and location of new foundations or footings.
- Floor Plan - detailing the location of walls, supports, size and location of doors, windows, electrical outlets, heaters, plumbing fixtures, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and the square footage of the project. Again, as with the plot plan, what is existing and what is proposed to be built should be clearly noted.
- Roof Framing - clearly indicating the size and methods of assembly of roof rafters and ceiling joists. Typically, roof slope and roofing materials are called out on this plan.
- Floor Framing - clearly indicating the size and methods of assembly of all floor framing members. Floor joists, girders and sub floor size, along with foundation connections, should be shown on this plan.
- Cross Sections - clearly indicating ceiling heights, wall construction, and R-value of any insulation to be used.
- Exterior Elevations- Clearly showing how the exterior of the building will look upon completion. Doors, windows, exterior material, etc. should be shown.
- Energy Calculations- any time conditioned (heated or cooled) space is added to a building you are required to show compliance with the State of California energy efficiency standards.
- Structural Calculations - structural calculations may be required if your project is of large size, unusual shape and/or more than two stories in height. These calculations allow the Building Department to verify that structural elements are adequately sized and connected. A lateral analysis is generally required on large projects to determine the capacity of the building to resist lateral motion caused by earthquakes or wind. This portion of the project must be prepared by a licensed engineer or architect.

What other information do I need to supply in order to apply for a permit?

When applying for a permit, the following information is required to complete the permit submittal:

- Description or scope of the work
- Location of the project (address)
- Legal owner's name, address and phone number
- Valuation of the proposed work which includes all labor and materials..

Can I draw up my own plans?

Plans, drawings and specifications may be prepared by anyone for the following projects:

- Single-family dwellings of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.

- Multiple dwellings containing no more than four dwelling units of wood frame construction not more than two stories and a basement in height. However, this paragraph shall not be construed as allowing an unlicensed person to design multiple clusters of up to four dwelling units each to form apartment or condominium complexes where the total exceeds four units on any lawfully divided lot.
- Garages or other structures appurtenant to buildings described above of wood frame construction not more than two stories and a basement in height.
- Nonstructural and non-seismic work.

If any portion of any structure exempted by this section deviates from substantial compliance with conventional framing requirements, that portion must be designed by a licensed design professional.

Who can obtain a permit?

Permits may be issued to:

- Property owners (for work on owner-occupied single-family or duplex-buildings)
- Licensed contractors
- Certified Agents with a Letter of Authorization signed by the owner

When a permit is issued, the signature and identity of the applicant must be verified. A California Driver's License, State of California Identification Card, or other positive identification will meet this requirement. Contractors are required current State of California Contractor's license. If employees are to be used, Workers' Compensation Insurance Company and policy number must be supplied.

How much will the permit cost?

The cost of building permits is based upon the Town of Paradise master fee schedule. Fees may be paid in cash, personal checks, and money orders or by credit card (Visa or Master cards).

How long does it take to get a permit?

Permit issuance periods vary. Some projects, such as re-roofs, water heaters, window replacements, and maintenance and repair work can be fully permitted over-the-counter. Other projects require that plans be submitted for additional review. For most projects the Town can review the plans within four weeks of submittal.

What about inspections?

It is your responsibility to call us for inspections at specific times during construction. You may have your contractor make the call, but it is still the property owner's responsibility to make sure the inspections are made. During the construction phase, inspections by Town Staff are required prior to covering any concealed areas. Inspections also are required prior to:

- Placing concrete or grout;
- Covering electrical, plumbing, or mechanical work;
- Covering floor framing;

- Covering interior sides of wall framing;
- Taping gypsum wallboard;
- Applying stucco;
- Covering fire sprinkler systems;
- Covering penetrations of fire-rated portions or floors.

Inspections are also required prior to connecting to or the hook-up of:

- Gas lines;
- Electrical service; and/or
- Water services.

These inspections are required to insure that the construction is proceeding according to the approved plans and project conditions-of-approval, and/or that all current code standards are being met. In turn, this will help to insure your personal safety and to secure the value of the improvement. It is your responsibility to schedule all inspections. During busy construction months, you may have to schedule several days in advance. Periodic inspections must be scheduled until the project is completed and final approval is given by the Town. After the job has received a final inspection, the building permit will be kept on file with the Town of Paradise as proof of the work completed.

Can I do the work myself or do I have to hire a contractor?

Property owners may do work on their own property, but certain regulations must be followed including Workers' Compensation Law. If the property owner hires anyone they may need to purchase Workers' Compensation Insurance. Proof of this insurance will need to be provided to the Building Department. The property owner will also need to fill out an Owner-Builder Declaration prior to the issuance of a permit.

How do I verify if a contractor is licensed?

Contractors are required by the State of California to be licensed by the California State Contractors' License Board (CSLB). You can verify a contractors' license information by telephoning the CSLB at 1-800-321-CSLB (2752).

What if I have a permit but never called for inspections?

Generally, permits expire after 180 days if no inspections have been made. In order for the project to be complete, it must pass final inspection. If a permit expires before final inspection, the project is in violation of Town codes. If this is the case, telephone (530) 872-6291 ext. 123. We'll help you to reactivate the permit or apply for another with as little inconvenience as possible. Our interest is in seeing your project complete...including final inspection.