

Building Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS A BUILDING PERMIT?

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications.

WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WILL BE NEEDED OR ASKED FOR ON THE PERMIT APPLICATION?

Generally, you will need to complete a building permit application and pay the permit fees, which will vary depending on the size of your project. You will also need to submit multiple copies of your building plans, floor plans, or other construction plans and specifications, and Site Plan. Building permit applications will request the following types of information:

- Project location
- Proposed use
- Scope of Work
- Property owner information
- Contractor's information and license number
- Types of permits being applied for

Other departments in the city may have comments on the application and require changes or conditions that must be agreed to by the builder as part of the approval process. Which departments are required to review your application will depend on the type of construction permit being applied for and the scope of construction.

WHO CAN PULL A PERMIT?

The owner, the owner's agent, or the licensed contractor signed for the project.

WHEN DO PERMITS EXPIRE?

Permits expire 180 days after issuance or 180 days following the date of the last inspection. To prevent permit expiration, set up an inspection before the 180-day deadline or submit a written Permit Extension Request prior to expiration date.

WHEN DO SUBMITTED BUILDING APPLICATIONS EXPIRE?

Submitted Building Applications expire 180 days after submittal. Extension requests must be submitted in writing prior to expiration date. Plans submitted to plan check prior to a California Building Code change may extend the plan check for a limited time into the new code cycle.

HOW DO I VERIFY A CONTRACTOR'S LICENSE INFORMATION?

Visit the Contractors State License Board website or call toll-free at (800) 321-2752.

WHEN IS A BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED?

A building permit is required to construct, enlarge, remodel, repair, move, remove, convert, or demolish any building or structure, or portions thereof. This includes garages, patios, carports, storage sheds, pools, retaining walls, fences, the addition or removal of interior or exterior walls, etc. A separate permit is required for each separate building or structure.

WHERE DO I OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT?

Building permits need to be obtained from the City of Lakeport Building and Safety Division office at City Hill located at 225 Park Street for any project within the City's boundaries.

WHEN IS A BUILDING PERMIT NOT REQUIRED?

Not all types of building and construction require permits in the City of Lakeport. A construction permit is not needed for items such as:

- Wallpapering, painting or similar finish work
- Carpeting, flooring, linoleum
- Fences six feet high or lower
- Single-story detached storage sheds or play houses less than 120 square feet in floor area
- Retaining walls less than 3 feet tall

Pre-fabricated above-ground swimming pools with a capacity of less than 5,000 gallons (please be aware that all swimming pools and spas must comply with the California Swimming Pool Safety Act, which requires child protective barriers ([see Pool Barrier Requirements for more information](#)))

- For plumbing, mechanical and electrical work, replacement or repair of fixtures (such as changing water faucets or replacing switches)

Remember, just because your project doesn't need a construction permit doesn't mean it may not need some other kind of City review. We suggest you call us at (707) 263-5615 Ext 205 any time you change your existing structure. Reviews may be required from other agencies; be sure to check before building.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO OBTAIN A PERMIT?

The time to obtain a permit varies widely depending on the type of permit.

Some types of construction permit and plan approval can be issued over-the-counter on the same day or within a very few days, while a complex discretionary permit or subdivision application may take many months to process. A Development Review Committee reviews more complex discretionary permit applications prior to submittal of the formal application. This process helps applicants identify issues early in the process.

In addition, many types of discretionary permit applications are referred for review to other agencies outside of Planning. These agencies may require conditions on the permit or may even require additional permits that can substantially add to the time that it takes to complete your project. Contact Planning and Building Services staff for an estimate of how long your particular Planning or construction permit might take to process.

WHERE ARE THE PLANNING & BUILDING OFFICES LOCATED?

The Planning and Building Services offices are located at 225 Park St, Lakeport, CA. Our Business hours are Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. You can reach us during business hours at (707) 263-5615.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A ZONING PERMIT AND A BUILDING PERMIT?

The purpose of a building permit is to ensure that new structures are structurally sound and safe for human habitation. Building permits are ministerial in nature, meaning that so long as the proposal complies with the Building Code a permit will be issued.

Zoning permits generally address the use of the property as well as the physical location and appearance of structures. Zoning permits are discretionary in nature meaning that there is no guarantee that the permit will be approved. Zoning permits can be approved, approved with conditions, or denied.

HOW DO I OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY?

Please come into the office and see a Permit Technician.

IS A BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED TO RE-ROOF A STRUCTURE IN THE CITY OF LAKEPORT?

Yes, re-roof permits can normally be issued over-the-counter at the Building Division.

IS A BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED TO CONSTRUCT A FENCE?

Permits are not required for fences under 6 feet high. However, zoning regulations may require you to obtain a zoning permit. Contact the Planning Department at City Hall to determine if a zoning permit is required.

HOW LARGE CAN A STORAGE SHED BE BEFORE A BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED?

1. A building permit is not required for a one-story detached structures accessory to detached one and two-family dwellings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet and the

structure does not contain any electrical, plumbing or mechanical work and is not used to store hazardous material or vehicles.

2. One-story detached structures accessory to detached a commercial building used as tool and storage sheds and similar uses, provided the floor are does not exceed 120 square feet and the structure does not contain any electrical, plumbing or mechanical work and is not used to store hazardous material or vehicles.

However, you should consult with a Department planner to determine setback requirements and design review requirements. A structure larger than 120 feet or one of any size that contains utilities requires a building permit.

IS A BUILDING PERMIT REQUIRED FOR A RETAINING WALL?

A building permit is required for a retaining wall if the wall is 4 feet or greater in height or for a retaining wall of any height if the wall supports a surcharge.

CAN A NEW SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING BE OCCUPIED PRIOR TO THE FINAL BUILDING PERMIT INSPECTION?

"Occupancy" of a new single-family dwelling can be granted if there are no outstanding health and safety issues and provided that the Fire, Health, and Public Works departments have approved the occupancy. A Building Permit "Final" will be granted only after all outstanding issues (health, safety, and other) are addressed.

Building Inspection Questions

WHEN DO I NEED A PRE-SITE INSPECTION?

A pre-site inspection is performed by the inspector to determine if a grading permit or other ancillary permits are required. The inspector also reviews the site topography to determine if unusual site conditions exist.

MAY I REQUEST WHAT TIME OF DAY I'D LIKE THE BUILDING INSPECTION TO OCCUR, SUCH AS MORNING OR AFTERNOON?

We will do our utmost to accommodate the time you'd like for your inspection. However, there may be an instance wherein it is impossible to do so, at which time we will work with you to find the next possible date and time possible.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE INSPECTIONS?

To schedule a Building and/or Grading inspection call (707) 263-5615 Ext 205.

To schedule the inspection, the Permit Technician will need:

- Permit Number
- Job Address
- Type of Inspection
- Date of Request
- Contact Phone Number
- Owners Last Name from Permit

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO ON THE DAY OF THE INSPECTION?

You are required to have your INSPECTION CARD and APPROVED PLANS in a dry, accessible place at the job-site. If either your plans and /or Inspection card are not at the site when the inspector arrives, your inspection may need to be rescheduled. The inspector will sign the inspection record (job card) for each construction item that is inspected and approved. If an item does not pass inspection, the inspector will leave you a correction notice. These corrections must be completed prior to calling for a re-inspection. A plan revision may be required to be submitted **and approved** prior to the next inspection *if any deviation occurs from the approved plans*.

Future inspections may be denied if there are any outstanding issues such as fees owed, changes to plans which have not been approved, failure to provide required/requested information, special inspections, structural observations, etc.

WHAT IF I CALL FOR AN INSPECTION AND I'M NOT READY?

You may be charged a re-inspection fee if the work to be inspected is not complete, the plans or inspection card is not available at the job site, corrections requested by the inspector have not been completed, there is no access to the inspection area.

NOTE: no further inspections will be made until the re-inspection fee has been paid and all issues resolved.

WHAT IS A "SPECIAL" INSPECTION?

A special inspection is performed by a third-party inspector hired by the owner to perform a specific technical inspection. The county inspector is **NOT** a special inspector. Special inspections are required to inspect as per the CBC section 17.

This requirement is usually determined in plan check, although, a change in the structure during construction can trigger this requirement later. A list of pre-approved special inspection firms is available in the permit centers.

WHAT IS STRUCTURAL OBSERVATION?

Structural observation (CBC section 17) is when the design professional, the plans examiner or the inspector determines that the project has specific components that need to be observed in the field, during construction, by the design professional (architect or engineer).

Again, this is the responsibility of the owner. It is not unusual for this to be requested by the inspector during the construction process if they find an unusual connection, conflicts with the plans as drawn, requested on the plans by the plans examiner or design professional, etc.

CAN I LEGALIZE AN ADDITION OR DETACHED STRUCTURE THAT WAS BUILT WITHOUT PERMITS?

Yes. You can submit "As-Built Construction" plans to obtain a permit for the illegally built structure. You may be required to submit structural calculations if "As-Built" structure does not meet all the provisions of conventional construction per the California Building Code.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE IS IN VIOLATION OF THE CODES?

If the violation is in progress a Stop Work Notice will be posted on the property and all work must stop immediately. If the work in violation has been completed a Notice of Violation will be posted on the property. In either case, a Notice of Violation letter will be mailed to the property owner who will be given a time frame (usually 30 days) in which to comply.

WHAT ARE SETBACKS AND HOW DO I DETERMINE MINE?

Setbacks are the minimum distance that a building or structure can be placed from a property line and other structures. Setbacks can vary depending on the zoning. Contact the Planning Department staff to determine your setbacks for the type of structure you wish to build.

What do I do if I receive a "Notice of Violation" or a "Stop Work Notice"?

1. **Go to the City of Lakeport Community Development Department** (225 Park St, Lakeport, CA)
If you received a Notice of Violation or Stop Work Notice, go to the Community Development Department and initially meet with the Planning Department. If you have any questions, contact the Chief Building Official regarding your case.
2. **Apply for a permit.**
Simple permits can be issued "over-the-counter". More complex applications are reviewed by City plans examiner and/or engineers and other City agencies.
3. **Schedule Inspections**
You are not done when the permit is issued. You must still schedule and pass all the inspections that are required for your permit. Once these are complete, you will receive a final inspection, at which time you will have finished the permit process.

4. **Note about as-built construction**

If you received a Notice of Violation for work that was already complete, you still must apply for a permit for that work. You may be required to expose the inside of walls to verify structural requirements or take other actions to verify that the construction complies with Building Code Requirements.