



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BUILDING PERMITS**

### **When do I need a building permit?**

Building permits are required for virtually any new construction, addition, remodeling project, or structural alteration as well as mechanical or plumbing projects. Any work started without an approved building permit is subject to a stop work order and an the possibility of an increased building permit cost, up to double the original cost.

### **Why do I have to get a building permit?**

The building code, which is the collection of rules and regulations governing construction projects (both new and/or remodel work), requires you to obtain a permit before doing certain types of construction. The building code is adopted by the City of East Grand Forks as a law. Permits allow the City of East Grand Forks to know when you are building or adding to a structure so that our staff knows which jobs need to be inspected. A permit also establishes a record of the construction and remodeling history of your property, which can be important when it comes time to sell, refinance, or insure your home.

### **What work is exempt from a permit?**

- a) One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 180 square feet
- b) Driveways and other flat concrete work
- c) Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work
- d) Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep
- e) Swings and other playground equipment

### **How do I get a permit?**

Come to City Hall at 600 DeMers Ave. Make sure you know the address of the property where the work will be done. Bring a sketch or plan for what you would like to do and an estimate of how much the project is going to cost. If you are having contractors do part or all of the work, make sure you ask them if they will be obtaining the permit.

### **How long does it take to receive a permit?**

It can take as long as 48 hours for the city staff to process your permit request. Once the review is completed, you will be contacted by City Hall staff regarding how to pick up the permit and pay the fee.

### **What documents need to be submitted when applying for a new construction permit?**

For new construction projects, a complete plan must be submitted. It shall include a site plan, floor plan, elevations and typical wall cross sections including the size and depth of the foundation. (Sample attached). It does not have to be to scale but shall show dimensions to clearly illustrate the intent of the work being done. The site plan shall show distances to property lines. A curb, sidewalk or fence are not property lines. The owner is responsible for location and conformance with required setback and side yard distances.

### **I'm building a shed. What are the City's requirements?**

If your shed will be larger than 180 square feet, then you will need a permit. All buildings under 150 square feet are considered storage sheds and figured at owner's cost. Whatever the size, it must be at least 3 feet from the rear or side property lines, out of the easement and be completely behind the house.

### **What if I'm putting up a fence?**

A permit must be obtained. All fences closer to the street line than the average set back in the area shall not exceed three feet in height, and all other fences shall not exceed six feet in height and placed not less than one foot from the respective property lines. All fences bordering the sides of the property shall be placed no less than one foot from the property line on which it borders and shall be no more than six feet in height. The finished side of the fence must face your neighbor. If you are putting up a fence on the property line, you MUST have your neighbors sign off. Click on link to print off form.

### **What if I'm installing a sidewalk?**

Any time a public sidewalk is poured or replaces, a permit is needed. The name of the contractor must be provided if you are not pouring the sidewalk yourself. The proper code requirements must be followed and the Building Inspections Department can answer any questions you may have. There is a refund of \$1.00 per sq. foot from the City if you replace your sidewalk.

### **What is the cost of a permit?**

Permit fees are based on the estimated cost of the work being done. This includes all plumbing and mechanical costs. For people doing their own labor, the estimated cost should be based on the amount the project would cost if a licensed contractor was hired to do the total job. (See table below.)

### **Can only licensed contractors apply for a permit?**

Minnesota State Law requires that all contractors building or remodeling 1 to 4 unit residential dwellings must be licensed by the State of Minnesota. Under certain circumstances, a homeowner may act as the general contractor for their own home. An owner cannot legally obtain a building permit for an unlicensed contractor. Owners who obtain building permits give up certain rights including the right to make a claim against the Minnesota State Recovery Fund to compensate for the contractor's failure to perform or fraudulent and dishonest practices.

### **When are inspections done and who inspects the work?**

An orange building permit card will be given with the building permit and must be placed where it is visible from the street. Our inspectors will inspect your work for several things, but not limited to footings, framings, final for building permit; plumbing and mechanical permits. Call (218) 773-0124, 8 am to 5:00 pm to arrange for an inspection at least one business day in advance of the requested inspections.

### **How do I find my property lines?**

Property lines are found by locating the property irons (buried in each corner of the lot) typically by using a metal detector. Otherwise, you will need to hire a licensed surveyor to accurately find your property lines. The City does not provide that service.

### **What if I'm moving a building?**

The name of the general contractor is required if you are not moving the building yourself and the cost of the permit is \$42.00. A map of the route the building will be taken through town will be required. A list of agencies that must receive notification of this route 48 hours prior to the move will be provided.

### **What if I'm putting up a sign for my business?**

New sign site plans must be submitted to the Planning Department for approval. Once the site plan has been approved, the permit can be issued. The name of the contractor and the value of the sign must be provided. The fee is based on the value.