



BUILDING AND FIRE SAFETY SERVICES CLIENT ASSISTANCE MEMO

BUILDING PERMITS Q&A

Why should I get a building permit?

A building permit entitles the applicant to inspections to verify compliance with building codes and standards. State and local codes were developed to provide for life safety, safeguarding property and the protection of the public welfare.

What is a building permit?

A building permit is an official document issued by the building official authorizing performance of a specified activity as defined in Section No. 105, International Building Code within the Jurisdiction of the City of Gig Harbor. The Department of Community Development is the official department for processing building permit applications within the City limits.

Do all development projects require building permits?

Any building or structure regulated by the International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) as adopted by the City of Gig Harbor may not be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, converted or demolished unless a separate permit for each building or structure has first been obtained from the building official except as specified within Section No. 105.2 of the IBC/IRC. (IE: decks less than 30" above grade, private storage buildings with a maximum projected roof area of 200 square feet, painting and similar finish work)

Is a building permit difficult to obtain?

Buildings other than single family and duplexes, usually (but not always) require other city division plan review and permits. It is because of the "multiple-division" nature of the permit that makes it seem like a difficult process. However, if a complete and detailed application meeting the requirements of each city division for review is submitted for processing, difficulties can be minimized. See brochures that discuss other division plan reviews and permits (IE: Site Plan, Conditional Use, Shoreline Management Permits). It is important to remember that different state and federal agencies may have additional application requirements and review standards. You are strongly encouraged to contact these agencies about their permitting requirements.

How long does it take to get a building permit?

After plans have been approved by other divisions for Site Plan compliance, etc., a building permit takes anywhere from 30-60 days to obtain. A building permit for a single-family dwelling usually takes 10-20 days.

How long is a building permit valid for?

Substantial progress on construction must commence within 180 days of the date of issuance or the permit will be voided by the building official. An approved permit is valid for 180 days from issuance provided that substantial progress (an approved inspection) has been made. The permit is then valid for an additional 180 days with the same criteria above being applied. An extension of time for not more than 180 days may be granted by the Building Official upon receipt of a written request provided the request is received prior to the expiration of the permit under which work was being done.

What if I or someone else disagrees with the final decision of the Building Official?

The International Building Code provides for appeal of a decision by the building official on building permits and inspections. Appeals are filed with the City of Gig Harbor Building Code Advisory Board. If a civil penalty order has been issued, the appeal must be filed within 10 days of the date of the issuance of the civil penalty order. Other appeals may be filed at any time. Details on filing of appeals may be obtained from the City Building Official.

Other standards which should be reviewed:

- Building height standards
- Minimum building setbacks
- Building Design Review (*i.e. - Entrance toward street; Elevations reflect topography; Paint color; Roof Slope, Roofing, Fencing, Site development etc.*)
- Fire flow standards
- Wetlands & slopes
- Shoreline Management
- Flood Plains
- Public Works Standard

Other fees and utility hook-up fees:

- Plumbing Permit
- Mechanical Permit
- Sanitary Sewer Hook-up
- Water Meter Hook-up
- Electrical Permit (*Washington State Labor & Industries*)
- Transportation Impact Fees
- Parks impact fees
- School impact fees

Notes:

What if I have other questions?

For additional questions regarding building construction, please contact Patty McGallian. For zoning and building design please contact Diane McBane.