

## WHAT IS A BUILDING PERMIT?

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a project.

### **When do you need a permit?**

#### **Permits are required for the following:**

- New residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and public buildings.
- Residential building additions (living rooms, family rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, garages, etc.)
- Commercial building additions or alterations for tenants.
- Residential work or alterations (decks, garages, fireplaces, swimming pools, remodel projects, etc.)
- Residential renovations (garage conversions, finishing an unfinished basement, kitchen expansions, etc.)
- Commercial remodels or renovations.
- Electrical services or wiring.
- Plumbing systems (drain, waste, vent, water and water heaters) new or relocated not replaced.
- HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems.
- Accessory buildings greater than 200 square feet.
- Telecommunication transmission towers.

#### **Permits are not required for the following (unless it is in the flood plain):**

- One-story detached accessory structures, provided the total area does not exceed 200 square feet and does not have plumbing or electrical.
- Painting, papering and similar finish work.
- Window awnings supported by an exterior wall.
- Door or window replacement (window or door rough openings should not be enlarged or relocated and additional framing not involved.)
- Exterior siding replacement and recovering roof.
- Electrical or plumbing fixture replacement.

**Items listed above which do not require permits are still required to comply with the applicable model codes and ordinances adopted by Muscatine County. Exemption from building permit requirements does not create or imply an exemption from the applicable model code or ordinance requirements.**

If the permit is not finalized within one (1) year of issuance, the permit is expired. A new permit must be purchased in order to commence work or submit a written request for an extension which would include a timeline of completion.

## **Why should you obtain a building permit?**

Your home or business is an investment. If your construction project does not comply with codes adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced. Property insurers may not cover work done without building permits and inspections.

If a contractor is performing the work on your project, obtaining the proper building permit will help ensure that the quality of the contractor's work meets the minimum code requirements as adopted by the community.

Your permit also allows the building inspector to protect the public by reducing potential hazards of unsafe construction and ensuring public health, safety and welfare. By following code guidelines, your completed project should meet minimum standards of safety and may be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, and your friends or future owners.

## **THE PERMIT PROCESS:**

### **1. Talk to Your Code Official**

Your building inspector wants your project to be a success and will help you with potential problems that could cost you time and money. You will be asked some basic questions (What are you planning to do? Where?) Permits cannot be issued until platted and/or lot split requirements have been met. Please make certain that these processes have been completed before applying for a permit.

#### **Codes and local design criteria:**

- 2015 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE
- 2015 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE
- 2015 INTERNATIONAL PLUMBING CODE
- 2015 INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL CODE
- 2014 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE

**Frost depth – 42"**  
**Wind Speed – 115 m.p.h.**

**Seismic Design Category – A**  
**Ground Snow Load – 25 lb.**

### **2. Submit application**

A building permit application is required along with all necessary documentation (who, what, when, where, square footage, site plan and floor plans as needed). Residential additions may require less information to be submitted, check with the building department for requirements for your project. Or for a list of plan requirements please refer to the **Plan Requirements Handout**.

### **3. Review Process**

The building department will review your plans/application and determine if your project is in compliance with local requirements. A building permit for a dwelling may take up to five (5) working days, other permits for smaller projects may be issued sooner.

### **4. Receive Permit**

With a permit, you have permission to start construction. A fee, based on the square footage is collected to cover the cost of the application, the review and inspection process. For a list of fees please refer to the **Fee Schedule**.

### **5. Job Site Inspections**

On-site inspections are required to make certain the work conforms to the permit, local adopted codes and plans. For a list of required inspections please see the Inspections Required Handout.

The applicant of the building permit is responsible for calling our office to schedule the inspections before any work is covered.

Inspections are performed between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., weekdays. If inspections are not ready when the inspector arrives, a reinspection fee will be charged. NOTE: We require a 24 hour notice, or inspections are not guaranteed. Call the office to schedule an inspection.

### **6. Final Approval**

A final inspection is required. The building department will provide documentation when construction is complete and code compliance is determined. It takes everyone in a community to keep our homes, schools, offices, stores and other buildings safe for public use. Your safe construction practices help protect you, your family, your friends and your investment.

Muscatine County Building, Zoning & Environmental Office

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