

Building Plans Review, Permits and Inspections

The City of Cleveland Building Department is under the Department of Community Development. This office is responsible for plans review, issuing permits and performing inspections of all construction projects within the City of Cleveland. This includes Building Inspections, Electrical Inspections, Mechanical/Gas Inspections, and Plumbing Inspections (Plumbing inspections are coordinated through this office for all plumbing systems connected to Cleveland Utilities throughout Bradley County).

Frequently Asked Questions

What are Building Codes?

Building Codes are rules and regulations that have been adopted by the City of Cleveland to help ensure a building meets minimum standards in regards to Life Safety and Building systems.

What is a Building Permit?

A building permit is a license required by city code that grants legal permission to construct, enlarge, alter, repair or demolish a structure or equipment (such as heating, plumbing or electrical systems) installed in a building or permission to change the use of a building.

When do I need a permit?

A permit is required for any new buildings, additions, alterations, and substantial repairs. Minor work such as painting, wallpapering, and routine maintenance of heating, air conditioning, plumbing and electrical systems typically do not need a permit. To find out if a permit is needed, call (423)479-1913.

Separate permits must be obtained for plumbing, heating and air conditioning, electrical, signs, and demolition. These permits are required even if done in conjunction with other work being performed under a building permit.

Why are inspections needed?

City code requires a permit to be issued when work is to be performed on a structure. Inspections are performed because our inspectors may uncover unsatisfactory work, faulty materials, or code violations that could result in unsafe conditions for the owner of the property or general public.

Who can get a permit?

Contractors must be licensed in their particular specialty such as electrical, gas, or plumbing to obtain a permit. A homeowner does not need a license to obtain a permit, however, they must sign an affidavit stating they own and live in the house on which the work will be performed.

Where do I apply for a permit?

Applications for permits are to be submitted at the Community Development Department, 185 2nd Street, Cleveland, Tennessee, Monday through Friday.

How long is a permit valid?

Permits are valid for the duration of the project provided construction begins within 180 days of obtaining a permit. If the project is abandoned for more than 180 consecutive days, the plans must go through the plans review process again and new permits must be issued before work can begin again.

What is Plans Review?

Applicants for most building permits must submit two sets of plans and specifications for the plans review process. This process ensures compliance with the city's adopted building codes, zoning ordinances, and other regulations. All plans are typically reviewed within 10 working days of the time they have been submitted.

What Types of inspections are required and who should I call to Schedule?

Builders are typically required to have the following inspections; footing/underground, slab/underground, framing/rough-in, and final inspections. There are also specific inspections for plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits. Please call the Community Development office at 749-1319 to schedule an initial inspection. Once an inspector has been assigned to the project you may contact the inspector directly. Please have the construction address and permit number available and what type of inspection is needed when scheduling.

If I have questions about my project, who should I contact?

First contact your field inspector. They have cell phones and will be glad to assist you. If you need additional assistance, you may contact the Chief Building Official at 479-1319.

What is a Certificate of Occupancy?

It is a document that certifies inspections were made and approved by the Building inspectors and Fire Inspectors that the structure is ready for occupancy.

What codes are enforced in the City of Cleveland?

- *2006 International Building Code*, Excluding Chapter 11 but including Appendices A, B, D, F, G, and H.
- *2006 International Plumbing Code*
- *2006 International Mechanical Code*
- *2006 International Fuel and Gas Code*, to include Appendix B
- *2008 National Electrical Code*
- *2006 International Residential Code* – Section R317 is amended to add: “Townhouses with five (5) or more units connected together shall have a fire sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.2.7 of the International Building Code, 2006 Edition”.
- *2006 International Property Maintenance Code*
- *2006 Energy Conservation Code* (per Chapter 13 of the International Building Code, 2006)
- *North Carolina State Building Code*, Volume 1-C, Accessibility Code 2002 Edition with 2004 Amendments
- *2006 International Fire Code*
- *2006 Life Safety Code, NFPA 101*, excluding Chapter 24

What drawings are required for Plans Review?

Depending on what type of project you have will determine the information needed to be submitted. For commercial projects please review the *Plans Review Requirements – Commercial* Document. For one and two family homes, townhouses, and accessory structures, please review the *Plans Review Requirements – Residential* Document. These documents can be found on the website.

When is an Architect or Engineer required to prepare drawings?

In Tennessee state law requires all plans and specifications for buildings and structures to be prepared by a registered architect and engineer, except projects which meet the following criteria:

1. Structures classified as *Business, Factory-Industrial, Hazardous, Mercantile, Residential, and Storage occupancies* which are...
 - a. Less than three stories in height, AND
 - b. Less than 5,000 square feet in total gross area;

2. One-family and two-family dwellings and domestic outbuildings pertaining thereto;
3. Farm buildings not designed or intended for human occupancy; or

Although the State of Tennessee does not require the drawings to be signed by a registered architect or engineer, the drawings must be prepared by someone who is qualified to design such a structure. The documents required for plan review remain the same (see *Plans Review Requirements-Commercial* and *Plans Review Requirements-Residential* documents).

The *Designer of Record* that prepares a set of documents that are not signed by a registered architect or engineer will be asked to sign a *Letter of Assurance* that they are qualified to design a project of this size and type.

Is it possible to meet with someone to discuss a project prior to submitting the documents for plans review?

We encourage architects, builders, and owners to schedule a meeting to discuss a project prior to plans review. We have found that this speeds up the review process and reduces potential issues with the project. To set up an appointment, call the Community Development Department at 479-1913.