

WHEN ARE PERMITS REQUIRED?

Outline for when permits are required for Single and Two Family Properties

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information and clarification regarding the City's requirements for requiring permits to complete works involving the construction of new or alterations to existing structures, plumbing and mechanical systems for Single Family and Two Family Homes.

Building bulletins are part of the City's customer service program. They are designed to provide an improved understanding of the Building Bylaw and Building Code and to reduce the costs associated with correcting infractions.

References & Background

All construction in British Columbia is to meet BC Building and Plumbing Codes as well as other regulations and Acts. The City of Penticton regulates construction through adoption of Zoning and Building Bylaws to ensure minimum life and safety standards are achieved. Some of the Regulations that pertain to permits are:

[2021 Building Bylaw](#)

[2018 BC Building & Plumbing Codes](#)

[Zoning Bylaw No. 2021-01](#)



What is a Building Permit?

A permit grants legal permission to undertake proposed construction, alternation, or repairs of a building, plumbing, or mechanical system as outlined within the Building Bylaw. This also includes a change of use such as turning a garage into a habitable area.

What's the Purpose of Permits?

Whether you are planning to build new or renovate, building with permits helps to ensure works completed are meeting minimum health, structural, and safety standards. All of us have a major investment in our homes and when that home does not comply with the BC Building Code or other regulations, then the value of our investment could be reduced, and it is possible that your family, guests or any subsequent owners could be at risk if there is improper construction. Obtaining a permit helps to protect that investment and reduce the risk of improper or unsafe construction.

The permit process involves the examination of the plans and details of construction projects against the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code, the Zoning and other applicable regulations, followed by limited spot checks, for health, safety, and the protection of persons and property and to enforce the regulations. A completion certificate is issued to the owner/agent when required inspections are completed.

Who can apply for a Permit?

Only the owner as described within the City of Penticton Building Bylaw or the owner's agent/contractor, with a signed Agency Agreement Form can apply for a permit. Where there is more than one owner, a single signature is only required to apply for a building permit. Work within a Strata building or Mobile Home Park, will require written verification from the Strata or Park manager.

Do I need a City Permit for Electrical and/or Gas Work?

Electrical or gas work must be completed by certified trades person or an owner as regulated by the Safety Act. These types of permits are issued and regulated by the Technical Safety BC. However, work taken out through the Technical Safety BC, may also require a City Plumbing or Mechanical Heating permit to ensure BC Building and Plumbing regulations are also being met. This may come into play when:

- A furnace is changed (low to high efficiency) or relocated requiring a review of heat loss calculations, duct sizing and/or fire blocking, or
- Hot water tank relocated, or switched to an on demand system

Please contact the Technical Safety BC for further information regarding electrical and gas permits <https://www.technicalafetybc.ca/> or 1-886-566-7233.

How long does it take to get a Permit?

The Development Services department has made significant changes to improve the processing times of permit applications. If a substantially completed application is provided, then the building department can typically issue minor permits within 10 working days, and major additions and new construction permits within two to three weeks. Please review the application checklists attached to each permit type to ensure the required information is provided at time of application.

Click here for permit applications: [Building Permit Applications](#) or go to www.penticton.ca/permits

When is a Building/Plumbing Permit required?

The following is a guide to when permits will and will not be required. Each type of permit is unique and exceptions can arise, particularly work to an existing building or landscaping. Certain minor projects listed as exempt may require a permit if it is determined that the proposed work could structurally compromise a structure or adjacent property (excavating for retaining walls near another building or structure) or is proposed within an environmentally (lake or creek) or geotechnical (steep slope) sensitive areas. It is also important to verify if there are any other changes on title such as no build covenants, easements or statutory right of way that could restrict your building project.

For more information on Land Title Searches see [Land Title Information](#) or contact Land Title and Survey at <https://www.ltsa.ca/> or 1-877-577-LTSA (5872).

Please contact the Development Services department for further clarification 250-490-2571 or email at buildinginfo@penticton.ca

Building, Heating and/or Plumbing Permits are required for the following work:

1. New Homes and Demolitions

- Construct a new house or duplex
 - Relocate an existing home, mobile home or manufactured home
 - Demolish a house or part of an existing house, duplex or structure
- *See Demolition Permits Bulletin**

See www.penticton.ca/permits for applications and forms or visit City Hall, Development Services on the first floor at 171 Main St, Penticton, BC.

Please note that new dwelling units or substantial additions will require registration with the [BC Housing – Licensing & Consumer Services](#). For further information, contact BC Housing at 1-800-407-7757.

2. Exterior Renovations and Additions

- Add to an existing home or detached structure
 - Construct a deck that is either:
 - a) higher than 600 mm;
 - b) attached to a building; or
 - c) supporting a roof which carries a snow load
 - Construct a porch or balcony or significantly, alter structure or guards for existing decks or balconies
 - Construct a basement walkout (door well)
 - Construct a heated or unheated sunroom or enclose an existing balcony
 - Construct roofing with structural work (i.e. adding new dormers, skylights)
 - Create new openings for, or increase the size of doors and windows; or
 - Changing the pitch of an existing roof or increasing dead loads (i.e. shakes to shingles)
- *See Deck Renovation Permits Bulletin**

3. Interior Renovations

- Finish a basement or other unfinished space
 - Create a secondary suite
 - Excavate a basement to increase existing headroom/underpinning foundation walls
 - Install, change, remove or repair, load-bearing walls and other structural components
 - Significant removal, or relocation of interior non-load bearing walls and drop ceilings; or
 - Change of use (i.e. garage to living area or creation of home-based business)
- *See Secondary Suites Bulletin**

4. Plumbing and Mechanical (including Solar systems)

- Install or modify heating system including ductless systems
 - Install or replace plumbing, drain and sewer lines
 - New or relocation of plumbing, drain and sewer lines
 - Install a gas fireplace as a heating appliance
 - Construct a chimney serving a solid fuel fire appliance
 - Solar Electric Systems
 - Hot Water Solar Systems; or
 - How Water Tanks – relocation or change in type of fixture (i.e. gas to electric or tank to tankless system)
- *See Solar Panels Bulletin**

Personal performing the above work shall:

- a) Possess a tradesman's qualification certification as a plumbing, or
- b) Be an indentured apprentice supervised by a journeyman who meets the criteria set out in **Clause (a)** or
- c) Be a registered owner and occupant or intended occupant of the single family dwelling in which the plumbing work will occur.

5. Detached Buildings and Structures

- Construct/demolish an accessory residential building(s) less than 10 square meters (108 square feet) in building area that do not create a hazard
- Change a building's use (i.e. convert garage to living space, carriage house or home based business)

*Please note sheds under 10 sq m, do not need a permit but shall not be constructed in an environmental or geotechnical sensitive area. Roof drainage should also be taken into consideration and should not be directed to City or neighbouring properties. See [Accessory Structures Bulletin](#)

6. Landscaping, Pools and Water Features

- Construct retaining walls over 1.2 metres in height
- Propose a new driveway access to a City street or lane
- *See [Landscaping and Retaining Walls Bulletin](#)
- Install a pool or hot tub, greater than 600mm (24") in depth
- *See [Swimming Pools Bulletin](#)
- Outdoor fireplaces and kitchens for Fire Department confirmation

Please note, that work in environmentally or geotechnical sensitive areas may still require a review.

7. Fire, and Flood Damage Repairs

An inspection should be arranged by the owner or restoration contractor when the Fire Department or an Engineer has completed their investigation to determine if permits will be required. Permits for repair work are expedited to not delay the repair process.

Refer to Bulletin: [Fire, Flood or Grow-op Remediation Restoration Bulletin No. 12-09](#)

When is a Building/Plumbing Permit not required*

A Building Permit IS NOT required to:

(Please note, that work in environmentally or geotechnical sensitive areas may still require a review)

- Construct an accessory building with a floor area of less than 10m², that does not constitute a potential unsafe condition and are sited in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw and contains no plumbing
- Construct a retaining wall supporting soil that is less than 1.2m in height, or in the opinion of the building official does not constitute a potential unsafe condition
- Construct/demolish an uncovered deck less than 600 mm (2 feet) from finished grade
- Replace windows, doors and skylights where there are no changes to opening sizes or structural modifications
- Re-roof for Single & Two family dwellings that do not alter the dead loads or slope of the existing roof structure
- Work under the jurisdiction of Technical Safety BC such as Electrical or Gas (Permits are required to be obtained from the Technical Safety BC)
- Minor repair or replacement of deck (note: complete removal of structural materials or guards will require a permit);
- Paint or Decorate, Install new floor coverings, Re-point brick veneer;
- Install a fence (note Zoning regulations for height and material restrictions);

- Install kitchen or bathroom cupboards without plumbing alterations;
- Replace exterior finishes with like materials – contact Building Department when closer than 1.2m (4') from a property line;
- Install landscaping (soft) – turf, gardens, etc. Please note City of Penticton [Tree Protection Bylaw 2001-26](#)
- Re-surface existing driveways and sidewalks (control drainage on-site).

Penalties and Additional Fees

Starting work without the benefit of a Building or Plumbing permit can lead to:

- Stop work posting, which will cause delays in the building project
- Doubling of permit fees, adding to the costs to your project
- Potential remedial repairs and removal of materials, adding additional costs to your project
- Notice of Title indicating works have been completed without permits

Resources

Worker Safety - WorkSafe BC

Owners are responsible to ensure that the worker safety is followed as well as contractor(s) are aware of the Worker's Compensation Board's Occupational Health and Safety Regulations pertaining to Hazardous Materials. A hazardous assessment will be required prior to issuance of a building permit for all renovations/additions for home older than 1992. Please refer to WorkSafe BC for further information:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/industries/construction/types/restoration-renovation-demolition>

Call Before You Dig

Please contact BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 or <https://www.bc1c.ca/>

Have questions? We're here to help. Please contact the Building Department at 250-490-2571 or buildinginfo@penticton.ca for more information.
