



## DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING, PLANNING, AND ZONING

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### **A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS**

We have designed this guide with the newcomer to the permit process in mind. It details the steps involved in obtaining a building permit – from preliminary review through final approval. This information will help applicants who have little or no experience with the building permit process. Experienced building professionals will also find information about the required amount of processing time useful for their scheduling.

#### **BUILDING PERMITS: When are they required?**

Generally, you need to obtain a building permit from the City whenever you construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove, improve, convert, or demolish a building or other structure. A building could be anything from a tool shed to a house. Additionally, code violations are generally required to obtain a permit to correct violations including minor property maintenance violations. A Building Permit may include building, grading, plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits. The City processes the various permit types required as one total package. If you have questions about permit requirements for your project, call the Building & Zoning Department at 706-866-2544 ext. 1200.

#### **Preliminary Review: Before you apply**

We encourage you to call or visit us before you submit your building permit application. We will answer your questions and let you know if your proposed project is within the City's development guidelines. You may be referred to other departments to determine if your project will require any Planning approvals before you apply for a building permit. Approval may require action by the Planning Commission and City Council.

If your project will require approval through the planning process, you must file a separate planning application and pay required fees. Those fees are separate from the building permit fees. Planning approvals must be granted before you are allowed to apply for a building permit.

You may also be required to receive approval from the Director of Fort Oglethorpe Water and Sewer, the Director of Fort Oglethorpe Public Works or the Department of Public Health to determine if there will be any special requirements. Asking us questions at the outset may save you processing time. We're glad to take the time to help – it's part of why we are here.

## **Do You Need to Hire a Professional? Ask us**

The City is committed to explaining the process as clearly and concisely as possible. However, the permit process can be complex, even for those experienced with it. Depending on the size and type of your project, you may need the services of a licensed professional. In fact, State law may require that a portion or your entire project be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer. Our best advise is to check with the staff in the Building, Planning, Zoning Department to determine if the services of a licensed professional will be needed.

## **Applying for a Permit**

You may apply for a building permit when the plans for your proposed project are complete and Planning approvals, if required, are granted. To apply you must turn in an application at the Building, Planning, Zoning Department located at 500 City Hall Drive consisting of:

- completed application
- Copies of required plans
- Supporting documentation (code analysis with all code requirements pertaining to project)
- All City Department approvals required for project and any other State or county approvals.

The application packet is available at the Building Department as well as on-line at [www.fortogov.com](http://www.fortogov.com). The information included on the plans and the number of copies will vary, depending on the specifics of your project.

Please note, you will be required to pay a plan check fee, or in most cases, pay a plan review deposit that will be credited towards the Building Permit Application.

## **The Review Process: What happens next?**

After your application is submitted, we will review your plans. Depending on the nature of the project, the review could involve several departments. The Building Department will determine compliance with building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, energy conservation, ADA, and stormwater. The Fort Oglethorpe Building Department will check for fire safety compliance. The Public Works Department will check for compliance with driveway standards and public improvement requirements. The Water and Sewer Department will review for water and waste management requirements. The Zoning Department will verify compliance with zoning regulations, including authorized uses within zoning districts, required parking, property buffers, building height, and setback. The Stormwater Department will review for pre-development and post development requirements in accordance with NPDES permitting and GSWCC regulations. The State Fire Marshal office, if required for the project, will review for compliance under their regulations, The Department of Public Health, if required, will review for compliance with their regulations.

## **Obtaining a Permit: How long will it take?**

The City reviews applications on a first-come, first-served basis. However, we are committed to processing your plans as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## **Corrections, Clarifications, and Changes**

The Building, Planning and Zoning Department will notify you when the initial plan review for your project is completed. If the plans cannot be approved as submitted, we will provide you with a list of necessary corrections from all departments that reviewed your plans.

Minor corrections can be made on the original plans submitted. However, if major changes are necessary, or if there are numerous corrections, you will be required to correct the plans submitted and resubmit copies of the revised drawings. Submitting thorough and complete plans initially will help avoid numerous revisions.

When revised plans are submitted, they will be distributed to the departments that generated the initial corrections for subsequent review.

## **Issuing the Permit**

After the City determines that the plans satisfy all code requirements, you will be notified of the approval and asked to pay all remaining fees. Upon payment, we will issue a building permit. You can then begin construction.

## **Inspections**

The Building Inspection Department will inspect your project as work progresses. You will be given a Permit Card to POST on the job-site in a conspicuous location. This Permit Card SHALL BE POSTED or inspections will not be conducted. The inspector will email the permit applicant approving or disapproving the requested inspection. The Building Department staff will conduct an inspection Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. **Request an inspection by 4:00 pm THE DAY BEFORE you wish the inspection to take place.**

## **Completing Your Project**

Although it is essential that you complete the inspection process, you do not have to finish your project during any fixed time period. From the day you pick up the permit, you are allowed 180 days (six months) to begin work on your project. Once construction begins, you must continue to work on your project to avoid expiration. When work is completed, you must obtain approvals from all departments that approved the plans before final inspection by the Building Department.

## **Why is the permit process so complex?**

The process of issuing a building permit may seem complex, which it is. It involves many City departments and outside agencies, and it may include a separate Planning process. The City is required by law to enforce numerous Federal, State and local construction and development regulations to ensure that your project is an asset to the community.

**City phone numbers to keep handy:**

Building, Planning & Zoning Department

706-866-2544 ext. 1200

Fort Oglethorpe Public Works Department

706-866-2544 ext. 1800

Fort Oglethorpe Water & Sewer Department

706-866-2544 ext. 1800