

CITY OF FREEPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Do I need a building permit?

Sometimes residents are unsure about when a building permit is a necessary part of a home improvement project. Basically, a permit is required any time any construction, installation (furnace, water heater, fixtures, and more), repair, renovation, rehabilitation, or maintenance is undertaken.

The only exception is that for minor jobs costing less than \$100 that **do not** include any plumbing, electrical work, or mechanical work (heating, air conditioning, ductwork), a permit is not required.

Permits are issued by the City's Community Development Department, which is located on the 2nd Floor of City Hall, at the corner of Stephenson Street and Walnut Avenue in downtown Freeport.

Can I do the work myself or do I need to hire a licensed contractor?

A licensed contractor is required for most jobs. The only exception is when the work is performed by the property owner or the owner's immediate family members (defined below) and the work is on a single family residential property and the property is the owner's primary residence and all the materials are purchased and installed by the owner or the owner's immediate family members.

For the purpose of building permits, immediate family members include the owner's spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, step-parents, grandparents, siblings and mother- and father-in-law.

Do I need a permit to put in a fence?

Yes, a fence permit is required. When you apply for a fence permit, we'll ask you to stake out the location of the fence so the City inspector can come take a look at it to ensure it complies with local requirements. There's no charge for a fence permit.

What about decks, garages and sheds?

Decks, garages and sheds all require permits. Like fences, we'll ask that you stake the area out prior to applying for a permit. In some cases, drawings of the structure may be required.

Are there benefits to getting a permit?

The City has experienced, qualified inspectors that will inspect the work done under City building permits to help ensure that the work is up to code requirements.

In addition, there is three-year property tax abatement on improvement projects made with a building permit. Not getting a building permit jeopardizes that abatement.

For more information on building permits, contact the
Community Development Department at (815) 235-8202.