GENERAL GUIDE: Building Permits and Inspections Process

A building permit is required 1) to construct, enlarge, alter, repair or demolish a structure or 2) for equipment to be installed in a commercial or residential building and/or 3) to change the use of a building.

- This guide describes what normally happens during the building permit and inspection process.
- **NOTE: Some details will probably vary, depending on your situation.**
- Have questions before starting? Then dial 311 and ask for “Plans Review & Inspections Office.”
  Or visit our website at http://www.cityofknoxville.org/plansreview/building.asp

Plans Review Phase - Plans are ONLY required for new construction and for building alterations.

*Important:* Doing only repairs or demolition? Then please skip ahead to Step E below.

A.  
   - **First, we will ask you for the address of the worksite.**
     Don't know the address? Then get it from the property owner.
     Does the location have no address? Then the property owner should dial 865-215-2500 and say, “I need to have a street address assigned to my property.” Or they may visit the Metropolitan Planning Commission (Room #403).

B.  
   - **Normally, you will come to our office, pay all fees, and give us multiple* copies of your building plans.** (See note at bottom of page).
     Don't want to come to our office? Then dial 311 and say, “I want to submit my building plans electronically.”
     Need to know the fee amounts in advance? Then dial 311 and say, “I need to ask about Plans Review fees.”
     Don't know what plans to bring? Simple residential projects require only a basic site plan. All other projects require construction documents (i.e., footings, foundations, structures, etc.).

C.  
   - **Afterward, you can view the status of your plans review online. Enter the number from your plans review form at https://secure.cityofknoxville.org/dana/home/index.cgi**
     Don't have internet access? Then use your plans review number in our automated phone system at 865-215-4830.

D.  
   - **Normally, an approval letter will arrive by mail within 7 to 14 days.**
     Did you receive a disapproval letter instead? Then follow the instructions in that letter.
     Did you not receive any letter? Then dial 311 and say, “I need to check on the status of my plans review.”

E.  
   - **Normally, the commercial or residential owner or their licensed contractor is required to obtain a building permit from our office.**
     For a commercial project costing $25,000 or more, only a licensed contractor can pick up the permit.
     (NOTE: On residential projects costing less than $3,000, your contractor is not required to have a license.)

F.  
   - **Normally, work can proceed on the project once you receive your approved building permit.**
     *Important:* Will your project involve any electrical, plumbing, gas, mechanical work? Then you must get a sub-permit before beginning that type of work (see Step G on other side).
     *Important:* The building permit should always be posted on the jobsite where it can easily be seen from the street.

* Normally, you will submit 4 copies of your plans.
  For interior work, you will submit only 2 copies.

SEE OTHER SIDE
The Sub-Permit Phase

Doing building alterations or new construction? Then you must first complete Steps A through F (see other side).
Doing repairs only? Dial 311 and say, "I want to find out what type of permit or sub-permit I need."

G. □ Sub-permits are required before any contractor can begin doing the following types of work: electrical, plumbing, gas, and/or mechanical.
   Need a sub-permit? Licensed contractors can apply by mail, by email (bldginspections@cityofknoxville.org), by fax (865-215-2627), or by visiting our office.
   Not sure whether you need a sub-permit? Then dial 311 and say, "I need to check on the status of my sub-permit application."

H. □ Normally, you will receive an approved sub-permit by mail, fax, or by visiting our office.
   Was your sub-permit denied? Look for an explanation on the faxed notice or letter. Or dial 311 and say, "I am calling to ask why my sub-permit was denied."
   Did you not receive your sub-permit within 3 to 5 business days? Then dial 311 and say, "I need to check on the status of my sub-permit application."

I. □ Once you receive an approved sub-permit, that type of work can begin on the jobsite.

The Inspection Phase

1. □ An on-site inspection is required for each phase of the work covered under your permit(s), and sub-permit(s).
   Ready for an inspection for your current phase of work? Then request an inspection by calling our Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) at 865-215-4830.
   Unsure what phases require an inspection? Then ask your building inspector.

2. □ All commercial projects require fire inspection(s) by the Fire Prevention Bureau before the final building inspection. Request an inspection by dialing 865-215-2283
   Is it a residential project? No fire inspection is required on residential projects.

3. □ Normally, after each inspection, a green "Approval" tag will be left on the job site.
   Was a red "Disapproval" tag left instead? Then contact Inspector at the number on the tag for more information.
   Can no tag be found? Then call the Inspector at the number found on the permit or the inspector’s business card.

4. □ When all required sub-permit and fire inspections have been approved, you are ready to request a final building inspection.
   With your permit number and three-digit inspection type ready, call our IVR System at 865-215-4830.

5. □ If all inspections are passed, a Certificate of Occupancy/Completion (CO/CC) will be prepared by our Office. You can get the Certificate by mail, by fax, or by coming to our office.
   Need a Certificate sooner? dial 311 and say, "I need a copy of my Certificate of Occupancy (or Completion)."

6. □ We urge you to keep your Certificate of Occupancy/Completion permanently on file.

Any Questions? Please dial 311 and explain your situation. The operator can help you and/or direct your call.