



**ORION Township**  
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# Homeowners Building Permit Guide

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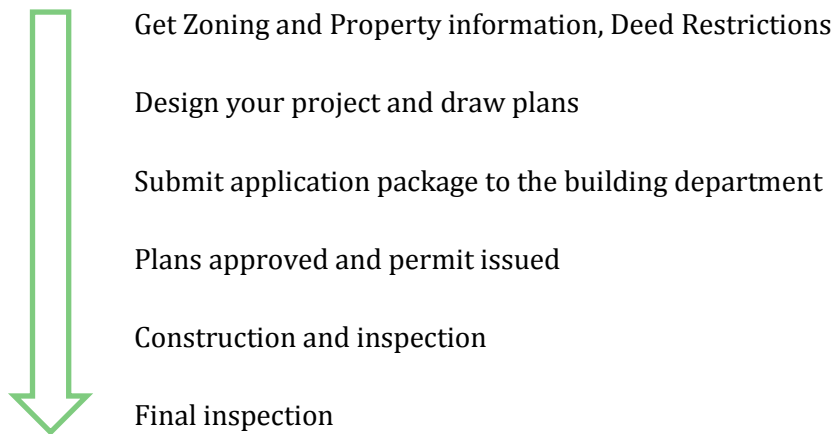
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**This guide was prepared with the goal to assist homeowners and contractors to avoid unnecessary delays and expense in the planning and construction of residential projects. Should you find that this guide does not answer your specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Building Department at 248-391-0304.**

## The Building Code

The purpose of the building code is to insure public safety, health and welfare insofar as they are affected by building construction, through structural strength, adequate egress facilities, sanitary equipment, light and ventilation, and fire safety; and, in general, to secure safety to life and property from all hazards incidental to the design, erection, repair, removal, demolition or use and occupancy of buildings, structures or premises.

## The Construction Process



## Permits

### When are permits required?

A permit is required if any owner or owner's authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the 2012 building code.

Compliance with the Building Permit Process will assist in the effort to achieve compliance with the Building Code, and at least a minimum level of required safety for the building occupants and neighbors.

### What does not need a building permit?

- One-story detached accessory structures, if the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet. **Requires zoning approval**
- A retaining wall that is not more than 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- A water tank supported directly upon grade if the capacity is not more than 5,000 gallons
- A sidewalk and driveway not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and similar finish work.
- A prefabricated swimming pool that is less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, and not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 927 L), and is installed entirely above ground.
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached 1- or 2-family dwellings.
- Decks not exceeding 200 square feet (18.58 m<sup>2</sup>) in area, those are not more than 30 inches (762mm) above grade at any point. **Requires zoning approval**

### Electrical permits

Electrical permits shall not be required, as in accordance with the Michigan electrical code for any of the following:

- Repairs and maintenance: Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment approved permanently installed receptacles.
- Radio and television transmitting stations: The provisions of the code do not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but do apply to equipment and wiring for power supply and to the installation of towers and antennas.
- Temporary testing systems: A permit is not required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

## Mechanical permits

Mechanical permits shall not be required for any of the following:

- A portable heating or gas appliance that has inputs of less than 30,000 BTU's per hour.
- Portable ventilation appliances and equipment.
- A portable cooling unit.
- Steam, hot water, or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliances regulated by this code.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter the approval of equipment or an appliance or make such equipment or appliance unsafe.
- A portable evaporative cooler.
- Self-contained refrigeration systems that contain 10 pounds (4.5 kg) or less of refrigerant, or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower
- An oil burner that does not require connection to a flue, such as an oil stove and a heater equipped with a wick.
- A portable gas burner that has inputs of less than 30,000 BTU's per hour.
- When changing or relocating a gas meter or regulator, a permit is not required when installing gas piping which shall be limited to 10 feet (3005 mm) in length and not more than 6 fittings.

## Plumbing permits

Plumbing permits shall not be required for either of the following:

- The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, then the work is considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in the code.
- The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves, or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, if the repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.

## Zoning

Zoning Approval may be required for your project. Examples of projects that require zoning approval are:

- Decks
- Fences
- Additions
- New homes
- Whole house generators
- Porches
- Swimming pools

For more Information on zoning visit the Orion Township Website. [Planning and Zoning](#)

- ✓ Check with your Homeowners Association for any rules or regulations that may conflict with your project

## Soil Erosion

A soil erosion permit is generally required for any earth change activity which disturbs one or more acres of land or which is within 500 feet of a lake or stream. [Part 91 Soil erosion rules](#)

## Applications

**A complete permit application package should include the following:**

1. A completed [Application Form](#)
2. Two sets of plans to include [Checklist](#)
  - a. Drawings or blueprints
  - b. Sections
  - c. Materials
3. A site plan or plot plan( if Applicable) [Example](#)
  - a. Find your plot plan at <https://gis.oakgov.com/PropertyGateway/Home.mvc>
4. General Scope of work to be done (description of work to be performed)
5. A signed homeowner permit affidavit [Click Here](#)
6. Letter from HOA approving project

The Building department offers handouts and templates for small projects such as decks and basements that can be used by the homeowner to complete and submit for permit. These templates can be obtained through the Building Department office or on the Orion Township website.

### **Fees**

Fees are due when you pick up the permit. A fee schedule can be found for all permits under the forms tab on the website. [Building forms](#)

### **Plan Review**

- After an application is submitted, a plan review will be performed on your project. If there are no issues, you will be contacted and can pick up your permit and begin your project. If the plan reviewer requires more information you will be contacted via email or phone. Utilize the handouts provided on the website to expedite this process.

### **Timeline**

- Submit Application package
- Residential plan reviews are usually completed in less than ten days. If you would like to expedite this process please contact the building official. If you have your plans in good order and follow the guidelines on the website, delays can be avoided and that timeline can be shortened.
- Pick up your permit ( payment due at this time)

### **How long is a permit valid?**

- A permit is valid 180 days after the date it is issued.
- An extension can be granted upon a written request to the building official.

### **What if my permit expires?**

- If your permit expires a fee of \$60.00 will be charged. We make considerable effort to inform you of a pending expiration date, but it is the permit holder's responsibility to maintain a valid permit and have their permit finalized.

## Inspections

Don't rely on permits for quality control during a job. Do not depend on your permit and Township inspections as a safety net for quality control. There is a difference between code minimum and the quality you specified or contracted to construct.

Inspections are scheduled on-line at our [website](#).

You can schedule inspection for the following business days up to 7:00 P.M.

Trade inspections\* must be approved before a building inspection can be performed.

- 
- Mechanical ( HVAC)\*
  - Electrical\*
  - Plumbing\*
  - Building Inspection is the final inspection you will need
- In any order

### Avoid Re-fees

An inspector may charge a re-fee of \$60.00 if the project is not ready or if the inspector cannot access the project. There is a guide on our web site that can help you avoid these costly fees. [Click Here](#)

A final approval is the assurance that your project is safe and code compliant.

If you have any questions please contact us, we are here to help you through your project.

### Call before you dig



[Miss dig](#)



## Homeowner Permit Frequently Asked Questions

### **When is a license required as a Residential Builder or Maintenance & Alteration Contractor?**

In general, a person who contracts with a property owner to do residential construction or remodeling on a project whose total value is \$600 or more, including material and labor, is required to be licensed as either a Residential Builder or a Maintenance & Alteration Contractor.

### **What's the difference between a "Residential Builder" license and a "Residential Maintenance & Alteration Contractor" license?**

The Residential Builder may build a new home from the ground up or may do any kind of repairs. The builder may contract for the whole job, but will have to subcontract for plumbing, electrical, and mechanical (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) work.

The Residential Maintenance & Alteration (M&A) Contractor is licensed to perform only specific trades and services and may accept contracts only in the services for which they are licensed (whether or not the building is new construction or remodeling). Each Residential Builder receives a wall license and a pocket card showing that he or she is properly licensed. For the Residential Maintenance & Alteration Contractor, the pocket card contains only a letter code representing the trade or trades in which that contractor is licensed.

### **Is it cheaper and faster to pull a homeowner permit?**

No, it is not more cost effective and the permit process is the same for anyone pulling a building permit.

### **Is there an order for inspections?**

All applicable trade permits shall be inspected and approved before a building inspection.

Trade permits include: (These inspections can be called in no particular order.)

Mechanical

Plumbing

Electrical

### **What if I have a permit but never called for an inspection?**

Generally, permits expire after 180 days if no inspections have been made. In order for the project to be complete it must pass final inspection. If a permit expires before final inspection, the project is in violation of building codes. If this is the case, call 248-391-0304

ext. 131. We will help you to reactivate the permit or apply for another with as little inconvenience as possible. Our interest is in seeing your project is completed, including final inspection.

**Is a Building Permit required for siding and roofing?**

No, Permits are not required unless you are replacing plywood.

**Is a Building Permit required for a shed?**

If a shed is over 200 square feet a permit is needed. Shed's less than 200 square feet it must meet the zoning ordinance.

**Is a Building Permit required for replacement windows?**

No, permits are not required if the opening for the window is not increased.

Is a Building Permit required for a fence?

No, however, there are guide lines that must be followed.

**Why is a permit required for a deck?**

- For the safety of your family and guests
- To protect future home purchasers who deserve reasonable assurance that the home they will buy will be safe.

**Does a fence require a permit?**

Fences and walls used to enclose a lot shall be no higher than four (4) feet in height and shall be located on the lot line. (a variance is required if you want a taller fence located on the lot line) privacy or decorative Fences and Walls. Fences and walls erected primarily for privacy or decoration shall not be located within any required yard setback area and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height.

It is a good idea to check planning and zoning with questions regarding fences.

**Do I need a permit for a sprinkler system?**

Yes, a plumbing permit is required for a sprinkler system.

*Protect Yourself*

**When contracting work to be done to your home...**

1. Always, hire a State of Michigan licensed contractor, licensed in the trade in which they are doing work.
2. Always, make sure that your contractor shows you the copy of the permit and displays it in a visible location. No, Permits are not required unless you are replacing plywood.

**What are some early warning signs that you may be dealing with an unscrupulous contractor?**

- A large down payment is requested before work begins any requests for money during early phases of construction.
- A verbal contract only, as person is not willing to put all terms in writing.
- You are asked to make your check payable to an individual's name or asked to make payment in cash or to make the check payable to "cash."
- The contractor suggests doing the work without permits or asks you, as the homeowner, to obtain the permit