

Do I Need a Building Permit?

Alberta's Safety System

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with the Safety Codes Council, municipalities, corporations, agencies, and other organizations, to deliver effective community-focused public safety programs and services to Albertans.

Questions to ask before you start your project:

- Do you need a building permit?
- Do you need any other permits?
- Where do you get a permit?
- What else do you need to know?

When do you need a building permit?

Building permits are required for most major construction projects. These projects include new buildings, additions, renovations, alterations, repairs, relocations, demolitions, or the change of use in an existing building.

NOTE: The *Safety Codes Act* requires that all contractors and homeowners in Alberta obtain permits prior to starting any work on buildings covered by the current edition of the Alberta Building Code.

Responsibility for compliance

The **owner of the building** has full responsibility for carrying out construction or having construction carried out in accordance with the requirements of:

- the *Safety Codes Act*;
- regulations related to the *Safety Codes Act*;
- the Alberta Building Code; and
- the permit, including compliance with any special conditions required by the authority having jurisdiction.

Importance of permits

The *Safety Codes Act* requires that permits in Alberta be obtained prior to commencing work on any buildings covered by the Alberta Building and Fire Codes, the Canadian Electrical Code, the Gas Code, or the National Plumbing Code.

Permits are part of a process to access compliance to a minimum standard of construction safety for the benefit of all Albertans. If construction projects are undertaken without required permits, the owner may be subject to penalties and extra costs incurred to bring a project into compliance.

As the property owner, you are responsible to obtain all necessary permits. A contractor can look after this on your behalf; however, you should specify in writing, who will get the required permits. Some jurisdictions may require a letter of authorization before a contractor can apply for permit(s) on your behalf.

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NOTE: The issuance of a permit or inspections performed by the local authority do not relieve the owner from full responsibility for any of the construction.

Other kinds of permits

Depending on the nature and scope of your project, you may also require one or more of the following permits:

- electrical
- plumbing
- gas permit
- private sewage systems
- heating and ventilation

Development permits allow for a specific type of development and ensure the local zoning and development bylaws are met. Check with your municipality to see if a development permit is required for your proposed project. Where applicable, a copy of the approved development permit should be provided with your building permit application.

Required plans information

Before starting any construction, you must submit plans with your building permit application to your municipality or permit provider. The plans may include any combination or all of the following:

- site plan
- foundation (basement) plan
- floor plans
- elevations
- cross-section

Benefits of getting a permit

When you get a permit, certified safety codes officers (inspectors) will:

- give you expert advice,
- review your plans to find any potential problems,
- inspect your project, and
- make sure your project meets the Alberta Building Code.

Making changes at the planning stage can save you money, rather than making costly corrections after construction. Certified safety codes officers will give you an inspection report(s) and follow-up on deficiencies to make sure your project is safe and in compliance.

Where do you get a permit?

Permits are available through municipalities that administer the *Safety Codes Act* and through agencies that provide inspection services on behalf of municipalities or the province. If you don't know whether your municipality issues permits, contact the Alberta Safety Codes Authority (ASCA) at 1-877-413-0099 or visit safetycodes.ab.ca/ASCA.

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Applying for a building permit

When applying for a building permit, you must submit the following information to your local authority:

- details of the project or occupancy to be covered by the permit.
- details of the land on which the project will be located, including a description that will easily identify and locate the building lot.
- plans, specifications and other documents showing, in detail, the proposed occupancy of all parts of the building.
- state the value of the proposed project.
- state the names, addresses and phone numbers of the project owner, designer and contractor.

Design Professionals

If the details are outside the scope of the Alberta Building Code, you may need the help of a professional to finish the structural design.

NOTE: The owner is responsible to ensure professionals are used where they are required by the code or by the local authority.

If the requirement for a professional is not clear, you must contact your local authority to get clarification.

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When applying for a building permit, you must submit the following information to your local authority:

- details of the project or occupancy to be covered by the permit.
- details of the land on which the project will be located, including a description that will easily identify and locate the building lot.
- plans, specifications and other documents showing, in detail, the proposed occupancy of all parts of the building, state the value of the proposed project.
- state the names, addresses and phone numbers of the project owner, designer and contractor.

Hire qualified tradespeople

Specific trades such as electricians, plumbers and gasfitters must be certified to work in Alberta. To find out if the tradespeople you are hiring need to be certified in Alberta or to verify an individual's status, you may contact *The Apprenticeship and Industry Training* office by calling 310-0000.

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Do you still have questions on whether you need a permit?

Contact your municipality if it is not clear whether a permit is required or whether a permit is already in place for a specific project.

If your municipality does not issue permits, you can call the Alberta Municipal Affairs Communications Inquiry Centre at 1-866-421-6929.

New Home Buyer Protection

The *New Home Buyer Protection Act* requires builders or owner/builders to provide new home warranty coverage for all new homes or large home additions built as of February 1, 2014. This warranty provides, at minimum, coverage of:




- one year labour and materials;
- two years labour and materials related to delivery and distribution;
- five years building envelope protection; and
- 10 years for major structural components.

Further information on the legislation is available at homewarranty.alberta.ca

More information:




Alberta Municipal Affairs

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Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4



-  Toll-free: 1-866-421-6929
-  safety.services@gov.ab.ca
-  municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca

Safety Codes Council

Suite 1000
10665 - Jasper Ave NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S9

-  Toll-free within Alberta:
1-888-413-0099
1-888-424-5134
-  webmaster@safetycodes.ab.ca
-  safetycodes.ab.ca

Alberta Safety Codes Authority (ASCA)

-  Toll-free within Alberta:
1-877-413-0099
-  askasca@safetycodes.ab.ca

Call (or click) before you dig!

Alberta One Call will locate utility lines on your property. Call or click before you start any project that involves digging in your yard. Alberta One Call will locate gas, water, electricity, drainage, telephone and cable TV lines. Allow at least two full working days for Alberta One Call to locate your utility lines.

These brochures may be updated periodically. They have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.