



*The County's permitting process is mandated by State law, but it also protects you, your family and your investment.*

State law, but it also protects you, your family and your investment by:

- Helping to assure that properly licensed contractors do only the work for which they are licensed.
- Identifying areas during inspections where the work does not meet minimum Code requirements.
- Detecting minor problems during inspections and bringing them to your attention before the situation worsens, potentially avoiding costly repairs, liability and life and safety issues.
- Making sale of a property less problematic; when selling a property, the buyer, realtor and/or lender may require that unpermitted work be corrected, properly permitted and inspected before closing, thus creating potential delays and impediments to a sale. It is always more difficult to secure proper permits after the fact.
- Lack of permits and final inspections may void your homeowner's insurance and may leave you susceptible to a lawsuit.
- It is illegal to do construction without a permit and it is a misdemeanor under State law.

## FAUQUIER COUNTY

### Department of Community Development

ZONING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Warrenton, Virginia 20186

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Additional information available online at  
[www.fauquiercounty.gov](http://www.fauquiercounty.gov)

# Do I Need a Building Permit?



**FAUQUIER COUNTY**

**Department of Community  
Development**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need a Building Permit?

Most new construction, alterations, additions and demolitions to a building require a building permit, including most mechanical, electrical and plumbing work. In addition, this work may require a Zoning and/or Land Disturbing permit. The first list below highlights work that typically **does not** require building permits, and the second highlights work that people often do not realize **requires a permit**. When in doubt, it is always best to contact staff for guidance on whether a permit is required.

### Building Permit Not Required:

- Buildings used for agricultural purposes (however, a zoning permit and/or land disturbing permit are still required).
- Single-story residential sheds and storage buildings 256 sq. ft. or less in size without utilities. (zoning setbacks must be met)
- Construction of a patio at grade with no railing or roof.
- Backyard residential play equipment.
- Fences unless required as a pool barrier.
- Retaining walls retaining less than 36 inches of earth.
- Low voltage wiring not part of a required system.
- Ordinary maintenance and repairs, such as: replacing toilets and sinks, replacing electrical fixtures and switches, replacing appliances that are not gas fueled; re-roofing that does not include structural or sheathing repairs; painting; installing or replacing floor finishes.

### Building Permit Required:

- Sheds or storage buildings that are prefabricated off-site and moved onto the property, unless less than 256 square feet and a single story.
- Installation of any water heater, furnace or other appliance with a gas connection.
- Building demolition.
- Finishing of basements.
- Any tent that is over 900 sq. ft. in size or that is to be occupied by more than 50 people.
- Any swimming pool or spa covering more than 150 sq. ft. or holding 5,000 or more gallons, or more than 24 inches deep.
- Change of use.
- Any removal or disturbance of asbestos containing materials.

### Must a licensed contractor obtain the permit?

In the State of Virginia it is possible for homeowners to apply for permits in their own name if



the work is being performed on their primary residence. If a contractor is being hired then the contractor's information should be provided in the permit application, or the contractor should apply for the permit so that staff can confirm that the contractor has the appropriate licenses for the work being done. Contractors must be licensed to perform certain work as required by the State of Virginia and must also possess a Fauquier County business license or exemption affidavit.

### How long does a Building Permit last?

A Building Permit may be revoked if the authorized work is not started within six months of the date of issuance, or if work is discontinued for more than six months. It is important that the permit holder keep this in mind because it is his or her responsibility to call for ALL required inspections including a final inspection.

### How do I apply for a permit?

The permitting counter is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*Come visit us at:*

Development Services, Courthouse Building  
29 Ashby Street, 3rd floor, Warrenton, VA

*Or call us at:* 540-422-8230

More information and application forms available online at: <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments-a-g/community-development/applications-center-forms>

### Why is it important to get a building permit?

The County's permitting process is mandated by