

Department of Building Regulations



# GUIDE TO PERMITTING

## ***Introduction***

The primary mission of the Richland County Department of Building Regulations is to insure the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Richland County and the areas under our jurisdiction. It is our goal to make the permitting process as simple and friendly as possible while ensuring that residential and commercial buildings, structures, and installations comply with the requirements of the applicable codes.

It is the intent of this guide to answer basic questions about the permitting process and direct the reader to the appropriate location for specific permit requirements.

If other questions arise or seem confusing, please call or visit our office and we will be happy to help.

Prior to the design and construction of any project, please call the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) at 1-800-362-2764. OUPS will inform the caller of registered utilities and assist with locating those utilities.

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[www.richlandcountyoh.us/c&p.htm](http://www.richlandcountyoh.us/c&p.htm)  
[permits@richlandcountyoh.us](mailto:permits@richlandcountyoh.us)

Getting permits and approvals in any jurisdiction can be a complex process. To the lay person, it may be confusing and intimidating. This guide has been prepared to ease the confusion by giving essential information as an introduction to the permit process.

This guide is not intended to provide all the answers to all questions, especially when projects are complex. This guide is intended to help get you started with the permit process across the various agencies that may have jurisdiction over your project.

Permits from other agencies are the responsibility of the owner. Contact information for other agencies that may have jurisdiction can be obtained from our website or by contacting our office.

The following permit and process descriptions are for a typical construction process. The permits and/or permit processes may or may not apply to certain projects that are very or atypical. Please to contact our office in person, by telephone, email, or fax and we will assist you with any questions or concerns you may have about any of our services.

### **How to apply for a permit and what to expect:**

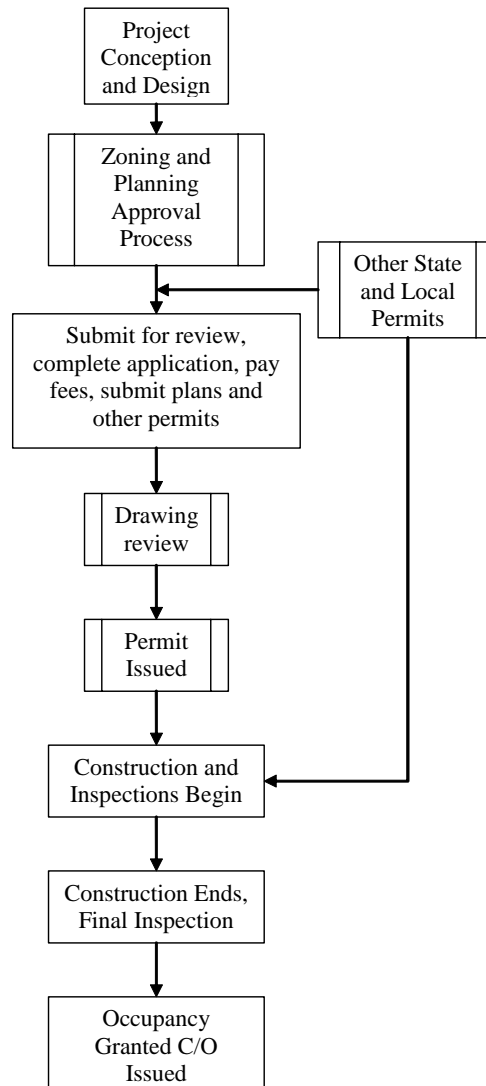
The first step is to obtain a permit application. Applications can be downloaded from our website, picked up at our office, or mailed/faxed by calling our office at (419) 774-5517. In addition to the application, it would be wise to obtain a guide for the specific type of project. The Richland County Department of Building Regulations has many guides available that list specific information that is required for a specific type of project. This guide will give helpful information on what is required to be submitted with the application on the construction documents.

The next step is to gather and submit the required information. Applications are accepted in our office from 8:00 am -3:30 pm Monday-Friday or mail the required information and fees. If you are unsure of any fees, please call our office at (419) 774-5517 or submit the required information and we will calculate the fees and call you with the amount.

## How long does it take to get a permit?

For residential permits, the review process is approximately 5 business days. For commercial permits, the review process is approximately 10-15 business days. Once a building permit is issued and ready to pick up, the applicant will be called.

A flowchart of the typical permit process is shown below.



### **What services are covered by the permit fees?**

Permit fees cover the application, plan review, all inspections, and the certificate of occupancy. Additional fees may be charged during the construction process for reasons including but not limited to the following: additional review of revised drawings, missed inspections, multiple inspections for incomplete work, or additional square footage included in the project.

### **What happens if I don't get a permit?**

If you are working without a permit, inspectors will order all work stopped and have any contractors leave the jobsite immediately. Permit fees will double, and work cannot begin again until a permit is issued.

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

You have twelve (12) months from the date the permit is issued to start construction, otherwise the permit expires. If in the course of construction, work is delayed or suspended for more than six (6) months, the permit becomes invalid. You may request an extension *prior* to the expiration of the permit for an additional fee.

### **How detailed do my drawings have to be?**

- For a residential building plan, the plans must be clear and understandable so that a contractor can build it per the plan requirements. Building plans for residential projects do not require an Engineers or Architects seal other than for loads or techniques not addressed in the Residential Code of Ohio. An engineered design is required on foundations with unbalanced fill greater than 4 feet and not reinforced per the Residential Code of Ohio. Please see the Residential Building Checklist for specific residential plan requirements.
- For a commercial building permit, the plans must be sealed by a Registered Design Professional (an architect or engineer registered with the State of Ohio). The plans must contain all pertinent information per the Ohio Building Code. Please see the Commercial Building Checklist for specific commercial plan requirements.

## ***Building Permit***

Building permits are reviewed, issued, and inspected under the Residential Code of Ohio for Residential Projects and The Ohio Building Code for Commercial (Non-Residential) Projects.

### **When is a building permit required?**

Building permits are typically required for

- New Buildings
- Additions
- Interior Alterations
- Manufactured Housing Installations
- Decks
- Accessory Storage Buildings
- Garages
- Swimming Pools- see swimming pool permit
- Towers- residential and commercial, communications, cellular, wind power, etc.

Building Permits are not required for work such as:

- Painting
- Carpeting
- Interior Decorating
- Routine Maintenance as long as installations and appliances are not being changed
- Cosmetic Changes
- Oil derricks

### **Why do I need a building permit?**

The issuance of a building permit grants permission to begin construction on the items reviewed under the building permit drawings. Electrical and mechanical items are typically reviewed with the building and structural work. Other work not subject to review by Richland County Building Regulations, including but not limited to site work, utility work, and plumbing work is subject to the individual governing agencies policies. No work shall be started until all permits are issued.

## ***Electrical Permit***

All electrical work is reviewed and inspected under the most current edition of the National Electric Code (NEC) (NFPA70).

Electrical Permits are required for:

- New electrical construction
- Alterations or additions to existing electrical systems
- Service Upgrades
- Emergency Back-up Generator Installations
- Site lighting
- Swimming Pools (issued under a pool permit)
- Power Poles- customer owned
- Manufactured Homes

Electric Permits from this office are not required for:

- Traffic Signals
- Railroad crossing equipment
- Cord-and-plug connected equipment
- Portable electric generators
- Amusement park rides

### **Who can perform electrical work?**

Residential Electrical Work can be performed by the homeowner or electrical contractor. A license is not typically required to perform electrical work, but it is best to check with the jurisdiction the work is being performed in. Commercial Electrical work must be performed by an electrician or electrical contractor licensed by the State of Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board.

### **What needs to be inspected?**

All electrical work needs to be inspected. Electrical work that will be concealed once construction is complete must be inspected prior to covering. This includes electrical rough-on inspections, underslab inspections prior to pouring concrete, and trench inspections for underground electrical work prior to backfilling. Please see the inspection section for more detailed information.

## ***Plumbing Permit***

Plumbing permits are reviewed, issued, and inspected under The Ohio Plumbing Code for both Residential and Commercial Projects.

### **When is a plumbing permit required?**

Plumbing permits are typically required for

- New Buildings
- Additions
- Interior Alterations
- Garages with plumbing fixtures
- Swimming Pools- depends upon jurisdiction, see swimming pool permit

Plumbing Permits are not required for work such as:

- Building Sewer Piping
- Garden Hoses
- Simple Plumbing fixture changes
- Routine Maintenance as long as installations and appliances are not being changed. Plumbing appliances include but are not limited to water heaters, boilers, etc.
- The repair of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe; provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain-pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and an approval shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in the plumbing code.
- The clearance of stoppages or the repair of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.
- Process equipment and the associated piping.

### **Who can perform plumbing work?**

Residential Plumbing work can be performed by the homeowner or plumbing contractor. A license is not typically required to perform plumbing work, but it is best to check with the jurisdiction the work is being performed in. Commercial Plumbing work must be performed by an plumber or plumbing contractor licensed by the State of Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board.

### **What needs to be inspected?**

All plumbing work needs to be inspected. Plumbing work that will be concealed once construction is complete must be inspected prior to covering. This includes rough-on inspections, underslab inspections prior to pouring concrete, and trench inspections for underground plumbing work prior to backfilling. Please see the inspection section for more detailed information. Typically, the local health department issues and inspects plumbing permits, otherwise, the State of Ohio will issue the permit and inspect the work. No work shall be started until all permits are issued.

### **Where can I find more information?**

You can contact the local health department or the State of Ohio, Department of Commerce for more information. Please visit our website to see a list of health departments within our jurisdiction. Otherwise, contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

## ***Zoning Permits***

Zoning permits are issued to verify and approve the land use and any associated development. Zoning permits are issued only in zoned jurisdictions. Zoning permits may or may not address a variety of factors including but not limited to aesthetics, building material components, setbacks, parking, site use, accessory structures, swimming pools, dumpster enclosures, building height and area, drive and entrance location, building signage, home occupations, and contractor registration.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Within zoned areas, the zoning inspector is the person who will accept, review, and issue a zoning permit. Some areas are not zoned and therefore, zoning is not regulated. A listing of all zoning inspectors within our jurisdiction is available on our website or by calling our office.

## ***Other permits- Local utility, Site development, Curb cutting, etc.***

Most, if not all public and private utilities require some sort of permit in order to connect to their system. Within municipalities, most of these permits and reviews are conducted and issued with a zoning permit. Utility connections typically will have some sort of a connection fee associated with their respective permits as well. Please make sure to verify contractor requirements as some utilities and/or jurisdictions may require contractor registration. Access permits or the like may be required from the jurisdiction that a property fronts or has road access to. These jurisdictions may include township, village, city, county, and state.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Within zoned areas, the zoning inspector would be the best person to contact regarding any local registration requirements. A listing of all zoning inspectors within our jurisdiction is available on our website or by calling our office.

For privately owned utilities, a contact number is typically listed on the billing statement or within the local telephone directory.

## ***Sign Permit***

Sign permits are required to regulate exterior signs to protect the safety and the character of the various communities and townships. The building code does not specifically address the aesthetic characteristics of signs. The building code only relates to the structural and life-safety provisions of signs.

- Sign permits are required for all exterior building signage.  
Exceptions:
  1. Signs painted directly on building surfaces.
  2. Temporary yard signs.
  3. Signs erected by federal, state and local transportation authorities.
  4. Signs not more than 2.5 square feet in area (0.23 m<sup>2</sup>).
  5. Signs required in accordance with the provisions of OBC Chapter 11.
  6. Signs undergoing minor repairs.
  
- Most zoning resolutions have provisions in them that specifically relate to signs, therefore it is a good idea to first check with the zoning inspector in zoned areas to become cognizant of any zoning regulations.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Please contact our office or visit our website. We have an information sheet for Commercial Signs that lists specific details and submittal requirements.

## ***Water Systems/Septic Permit***

Water systems include drilled wells, ponds, springs, cisterns, and tanks for the storage of potable water. Septic Systems dispose of sewage that is generated by a home or business. Private systems serve a residence that is not connected to some means of centralized distribution and/or collection. Public or commercial systems are regulated by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

### **Where can I find more information?**

You can contact the local health department for more information. Please visit our website to see a list of health departments and EPA contacts within our jurisdiction. Otherwise, contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

## ***Swimming Pool Permit***

Swimming pool permits are reviewed, issued, and inspected under the Richland County Building Code for Swimming Pools for Residential Projects and The Ohio Building Code for Commercial Swimming Pools. All electrical work pertaining to swimming pools is reviewed and inspected under the most current edition of the National Electric Code (NEC) (NFPA 70).

Swimming Pool Permits are required for the following installations that have a depth of more than two-feet (2’):

- In ground swimming pools
- Above-ground swimming pools
- Spas
- Hot-Tubs

Permits are required for both permanent and non-permanent (storable) installations. Commercial Swimming Pool permits require the prior approval by the Ohio Department of Health.

### **Who can install a swimming pool?**

A contractor's license or registration is not needed to install a swimming pool, however it is recommended to contact a professional swimming pool installer. For a residential pool, electrical work can be performed by the homeowner or electrical contractor. Commercial Electrical work for a swimming pool must be installed by an electrician or electrical contractor who is licensed by the State of Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board.

### **What needs to be inspected for a swimming pool or spa?**

All excavation work needs to be inspected to make sure the structure will be properly supported. This inspection needs to be made and approved prior to placing any concrete or pool items. Any underground trenches for utilities as well as any concealed electrical grounding or bonding may be inspected at this time as well. Prior to using the pool, a final inspection of the pool, equipment, fences and/or decks need to be made and approved. Please have the pool filled with water and the circulation/sanitation equipment working prior to final inspection.

### **Where can I find more information?**

We have an information sheet for Swimming Pools that list specific details and submittal requirements. You can also contact the Ohio Department of Health for requirements for Commercial Swimming Pools. Please visit our website or contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Within zoned areas, the zoning inspector is the person who will accept, review, and issue a zoning permit. Some areas are not zoned and therefore, zoning is not regulated. A listing of all zoning inspectors within our jurisdiction is available on our website or by calling our office.

## ***Storm Water Permits***

### **Why is a stormwater permit required?**

As our population increases throughout counties and municipalities, so does the volume of water, from constructions sites as does the runoff of silt and sediment. Wise choices of controlling these are needed to keep these issues reduced and controlled.

### **What activities require a stormwater permit?**

- The development, both residential and commercial, will create or add impervious surface (driveway, roof, etc.) to a parcel of land. Typically in commercial developments, an engineered plan is required to address runoff and erosion control of the site.
- The proposed development will significantly change the use (e.g., from residential to commercial) of a parcel or parcels.
- The development will involve earth-disturbing activities within the proximity of a stream, a wetland, or Special Flood Hazard Area. A Special Flood Hazard Permit is required in Flood Hazard Area or floodplains.
- The construction of Ponds/Lakes or the development of a site that will involve cut and filling and or the clearing of a site.

### **Where can I find more information?**

For incorporated areas, the zoning inspector, engineer's office, or planning commission typically handles stormwater issues. Typically, zoning permits within incorporated areas will include a stormwater review and permit. For unincorporated areas, the county engineer or soil and water district may handle stormwater issues. Please visit our website for a comprehensive list of contacts. If you are still unsure, please contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

## ***Inspections***

### **What information is required for an inspection?**

All work to be inspected must be complete and accessible to the inspector. An approved set of plans and the permit card must be on site. The address or house number must be plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property.

### **How soon can I have an inspection?**

When the work is completely ready for inspection and a twenty-four (24) hour notice is given for such inspection.

### **Who should schedule an inspection?**

Inspections may be scheduled by the owner, contractor, architect, or engineer. The person scheduling the inspection should make sure that all parties working on the job are aware of the inspection, the work is complete and ready to be inspected, and the inspector can access the work to be inspected.

### **How do I schedule an inspection?**

A twenty-four (24) hour notice is required for inspections. Please call our office at (419) 774-5517 and have the following information ready:

- Permit Number
- Project Name
- Project Location
- Type of inspection desired
- Date of desired inspection

### **Do I need to be present for an inspection?**

No. The inspector does need to have access to the work to be inspected. If no one will be present during the inspection, please leave directions (i.e. - key location, lock combination, garage door code, etc.) for the inspector to gain access if the structure will be locked.

**When do you inspect?**

Inspection times vary by location and type of project. Please call our office or visit our website for the most recent inspection schedule and times of coverage.

If these scheduled days for your project present a problem for a specific situation, please call our office *prior to scheduling an inspection* and every effort will be made to accommodate the specific situation.

**Will you give an inspection time?**

Unfortunately, we cannot give inspection times or appointments when the inspection is scheduled. The inspection schedules are made the day of the inspection. Please call our office after 8:30 am the day of the inspection and an approximate 2-hour window will be given as to when the inspector will be on the job site.

**Will the inspector call prior to making an inspection?**

If requested at the time of scheduling, the inspector will call approximately 30 minutes prior to the inspection.

### **What types of inspections are required?**

Depending on the type of construction, you could have the following inspections:

- Footing inspection- after reinforcing steel is placed and prior to placing concrete
- Poured concrete wall inspection- reinforcing steel is placed and prior to placing concrete
- Underslab- after required vapor barriers and reinforcing steel are placed and prior to placing concrete
- Electrical Service- prior to connection of the electrical service.
- Rough-in Electric/Mechanical- prior to covering walls or ceilings; done with Structural Framing inspection.
- Structural Framing- Prior to covering walls; done with Rough-in electrical inspection.
- Above Ceiling- After hanging and properly supporting ceiling grid and fixtures, prior to placing ceiling tiles.
- For projects with a Richland County Sanitary Sewer permit, an inspection is required by the Richland County Wastewater division. Please call the Wastewater Division at (419) 774-4002 and schedule an inspection prior to placing backfill in the trench.
- Final Building and Electrical- prior to moving in items including but not limited to furniture, stock, appliances, or equipment. Air balance reports are required as well.
- Final Inspections by other agencies– other inspections are typically required by the local fire authority for items such as fire suppression, fire alarm, automatic sprinkler, and smoke alarm systems. A copy of these reports shall be submitted prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

## ***Certificate of Occupancy***

A certificate of occupancy (C/O) is issued once a project is completed, inspected, and approved. The C/O will state the project description, code the project complies with, and establishes any special limitations or conditions for the occupancy of the structure. The C/O will be issued by the department once all inspections have been completed and all required reports have been submitted.

C/O's are issued for residential and commercial projects:

- New structures
- Additions or alterations to existing structures
- Existing buildings that undergo a change of use and occupancy
- Temporary occupancy of a structure under construction.
  - A temporary C/O may be requested from the department and may be issued prior to the entire completion of the project provided that the structure or portions of it can be safely occupied.

### **How long does it take to get a C/O?**

Depending upon the type of project, a C/O is typically issued within 5-10 business days after receipt of all required inspection documents.

### **Is there a fee for a C/O?**

There is no charge for C/O's. The cost is covered in the permit fees. There is a charge for temporary C/O's because of the extra inspections that are required. The fee is subject to the most current fee schedule.

## ***Contractor Licenses and Registration***

Contractor licenses and registrations typically register and collect information about the specific contractor or company performing work. Licenses and registrations are good for a certain period of time, typically one calendar year, and are not permit specific. A contractor will need a permit for each job, but will not need a new license or registration for each job.

### **What are contractor licenses and registrations?**

A license means that a person or firm has demonstrated work experience in their field or trade, their competence in that field or trade has been examined and approved, and they have provided company and contact information

A registration means that a person or firm has provided company and/or contact information. Registration may also require proof of insurance, payroll certifications, and posting of a performance bond.

### **Who needs a license?**

Commercial Specialty Contractors (Electrical, HVAC, Refrigeration, Plumbing, or Hydronics) are licensed by the State of Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board. Commercial General Contractors and Residential Contractors are not licensed at this time.

### **Who needs a registration?**

Richland County registers sanitary sewer contractors who are connecting to county-owned sanitary sewers. Other municipalities may register contractors at their own discretion independent of our department.

### **Where can I find more information?**

For Richland County Sanitary Sewer Contractor registration requirements, visit our website and download the Sanitary Sewer Contractor Registration Packet or contact our office and we will assist in any way we can. The zoning inspector would be the best person to contact within a municipality regarding any local registration requirements. A listing of all zoning inspectors within our jurisdiction is available on our website or by calling our office.

## ***Cosmetology Licenses***

Cosmetology licenses protect and support the public through regulation and education while promoting the integrity of the cosmetology industry.

### **When is a cosmetology license required?**

A cosmetology license is required to operate a hair or tanning salon. A cosmetology license is not required by our department, however in order to obtain a cosmetology license, you may need to have a current certificate of occupancy. For more information on a certificate of occupancy, please read the Certificate of Occupancy Section.

### **Who issues cosmetology licenses?**

The Ohio State Board of Cosmetology licenses hair and tanning salons.

### **Where can I find more information?**

You can contact the Ohio State Board of Cosmetology for specific requirements. Contact information is available on our website or you can contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

## ***Daycare Licenses***

Daycare licenses are issued to protect the safety, welfare, and well-being of children who are cared for in daycare facilities.

### **When is a daycare license required?**

Anyone who cares for more than six (6) children is required to obtain a daycare license. A daycare license is not required by our department, however in order to obtain a daycare license, you may need to have a current certificate of occupancy. For more information on a certificate of occupancy, please read the Certificate of Occupancy Section.

### **Who issues daycare licenses?**

Daycare facilities operated by a public or private school are licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. Other daycare operations are licensed by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.

### **Where can I find more information?**

You can contact the Ohio Department of Health or the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services-Children and Families Department for specific requirements. Contact information is available on our website or you can contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

## ***Food Service Licenses***

### **What is a food service license and when is it required?**

A place, location, site, or separate area where food is stored, processed, prepared, manufactured or otherwise held or handled for sale either in individual or multiple portions may require a license from the health department. A site review and plan review with construction inspections may be required before licensing as a food service operation or retail food establishment.

Our department does not require a food service license, however in order to obtain a Food Service License, you may need to have a current certificate of occupancy. For more information on a certificate of occupancy, please read the Certificate of Occupancy Section.

### **Where can I find more information?**

You can contact your local Health Department for specific requirements. A listing of the Health Department within our jurisdiction is available on our website. Please visit our website or contact our office and we will assist in any way we can.

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This guide is intended to educate the user on the basic permitting process. Regulations and codes change periodically and Richland County is not responsible for the content contained within this guide. It is the responsibility to verify information is correct. Please contact our office with any questions concerns.

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