

## What documentation do I need to put up a shed or fence?

A zoning certificate is required for any storage shed 256 square feet or less and any fences located on a corner lot. Please bring two copies of the land survey with you in order to obtain the zoning certificate.

## What is a zoning certificate?

A zoning certificate is a document that allows the construction of structures that do not require a permit as per the building code. This includes fences on corner lots, accessory structures (sheds, garages, etc.) less than 256 square feet, and any other zoning approvals as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

## How do I get historical information about permits on a property that I am interested in buying?

In order to get copies of our historical records, the applicant must submit a completed "Freedom of Information Act" (FOIA) Request for Public Records form with as much detail as possible for review by the Planning Department's Records Manager and the City Attorney's Office.

## How do I request an inspection?

An inspection is only conducted after a permit is issued. Please call the City's automated "Interactive Voice Response System" (IVR) and follow the prompts. The phone number is 757-664-6509.

## Where to apply

The Building Permit application is available at the Development Services Center offices or online at:

<http://www.norfolk.gov/planning> >>  
Development Services Center >>  
Applications and Forms.

## Additional Information

Questions regarding the Building Permit process? Please contact the Development Services Center: (757) 664-6565 or email at: [planning@norfolk.gov](mailto:planning@norfolk.gov).

Suggestions for improvement? Please call or email the Department of City Planning with your ideas.



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## BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS



**Development  
Services Center**

*City of Norfolk*



**THE CITY OF  
NORFOLK**  
CITY PLANNING

## BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

### When do I need a building permit?

A building permit is required for any residential or commercial repair (alteration), addition, or new construction that requires new framing or exposes existing framing. There are different requirements depending on the type of project: residential or commercial.

### When do I need a building permit for a residential project?

For residential projects, building permits are required to remove drywall, construct new partition walls or bearing walls, relocate walls, install new framing, change the roof pitch, construct decks, build room additions, screen porches, cover porches, build any accessory structure over 256 square feet, install pre-manufactured carports, install swimming pools deeper than 2 feet, install hot tubs/spas, and construct masonry walls with a footing.

### When do I need a building permit for a commercial project?

For commercial projects, building permits are required to remove drywall, construct new partition walls or bearing walls, relocate walls, install new framing, re-roof, side or cover exterior walls, complete tenant build-outs, complete a change in use, obtain a change in occupancy, build additions, construct commercial accessory structures, install fences taller than 6 feet, install fire suppression equipment and fire

alarms, install elevators, install paint booths, construct service station islands and canopies, and install pre-manufactured steel buildings.

### What does not require a building permit?

Building permits are not required for 1 and 2 family residential re-roofs, replacement windows of the same size, vinyl or shake siding, cabinets, floor coverings, minor repair to decks including but not limited to deck board repair and tread repair, driveways, water tanks supported on grade at 5,000 gallons or less, retaining walls supporting less than 2 feet of unbalanced fill, and above ground swimming pools less than 2 feet deep.

### What documentation should I bring with me to obtain a building permit?

A complete application will include the application form and 2 copies of floor plans drawn to scale. In most cases, a copy of the land survey with a detailed description of the future work is also required. If the property is in a flood zone, an elevation certificate is also required.

### What much does a building permit cost?

The price of a permit varies greatly and is dependent on the nature of your project. Please reference our permit [fee schedule](#) at: [www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1494](http://www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1494).

### Who should apply for a building permit, the property owner or the contractor?

As a property owner, tenant, or contractor, you may apply for a building permit. If a contractor is performing work on your property, it is highly recommended that they obtain the permit and be listed as the responsible party. A property owner may choose to perform the work and obtain a permit themselves, but will also need to submit an affidavit accepting responsibility for all work performed under the permit. Class A, B, or C contractors licensed in the state of Virginia may only obtain permits within their respective trade. Persons holding a tradesmen license in the state of Virginia may only obtain permits for projects within their trade not to exceed \$1,000 in scope.

### How long do residential and commercial plan reviews take?

Residential plan review takes approximately 5 business days to complete for any new construction. Plan review for additions and renovations can be reviewed at the counter immediately (except when further approvals are needed from other offices such as Environmental Services and/or Zoning). Commercial plan review takes approximately 10 business days to complete for new construction, additions, and any other work. All commercial plans must be checked in at the counter.