Residential Building Permits

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RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do I need a permit?

The purpose of a permit is to ensure that your structure will be built in a safe manner and in accordance with the requirements of the Building and Zoning Codes. This provides you with a reasonable assurance that the building will be safe for all who will use the structure now and in the future.

Do I need more than one permit?

Separate permits will be required for connections to utilities and work in the public right-of-way (sidewalks and curb cuts for driveways). Separate permits may also be needed for mechanical work and plumbing work if that work is not combined with the building permit. If performing electrical work, you will want to contact the Department of Labor and Industries for a permit.

How long will it take to have my permit approved?

Permit approval usually takes about 3-5 weeks. Times may vary depending upon the complexity of the project and time of year.

How long is my permit good for?

Permits will expire if work is not started within 180 days after the issuance of the permit or if no inspections are requested for a period of 180 days. If you are unable to keep the progress of your project going you may submit a written request for an extension.

What inspections will be required?

Some of the typical inspections that are required for a project are: sewer line, footings, foundation wall, underfloor, shearwall, rough-in plumbing, rough-in mechanical, framing, insulation, sheetrock nailing and a final inspection.

How do I schedule an inspection?

Call the Inspection Request Line at 360-577-3320. You will be asked for the address of your project, the permit number, type of inspection and contact information. Typically requests made before the end of the day will be done the next day.

What codes does the City of Kelso use?

- Kelso Municipal Code Title 17 – Unified Development Code
- International Residential Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, Washington State Energy Code,

What do I do if I have questions about the code?

Feel free to call us at 360-423-9922. We will be happy to answer any questions about building, planning and Right of Way requirements. We try to return all phone calls within 1 business day.

Do I need an architect or engineer to design my plans?

Not if you can meet the prescriptive requirements of the code. Buildings that exceed the prescriptive limitations will need to be designed by an architect or an engineer. In addition, some sites may require that the soils be evaluated by a geotechnical engineer.

What documents will I need to submit when I apply for my building permit?

Along with a completed Building Permit Application and a Civil Engineering Application, two complete sets of building drawings need to be submitted. Each page of the drawings shall include the address and the name of the project. In addition, drawings shall be drawn to scale, fully dimensioned, done in a professional manner (pencil and ink drawings will not be accepted) and shall include the following sheets and information:

1. A **Foundation Plan** including the following information:
   - Dimensions of the footing and the foundation wall.
   - Details of the reinforcement in the footing and the foundation wall.
   - The size and location of all spread footings supporting point loads.
   - The location and size of the crawl space access.
   - Details of the ventilation for under-floor spaces.

2. A **Floor Plan** including the following information:
   - The location and type of braced wall lines and braced panels. (See chapter 6 of the International Residential Code for prescriptive bracing requirements.) If your building does not meet the prescriptive bracing requirements of the International Residential Code a designed lateral-force-resisting system will be required for your building. Calculations stamped by a Washington State engineer or architect will need to accompany the designed lateral-force-resisting system.
   - The location of all source-specific ventilation fans and their CFM ratings.
   - The location and type of all mechanical equipment (furnaces, heat pumps, etc.).
   - The location and type of water heater.
   - The location of all plumbing fixtures.
   - The sizes of all columns.
   - The sizes for all window and door headers.
   - The details of the required fire separation between the garage and house.
   - The details for the protection of mechanical equipment located in garages.
   - The locations of all smoke detectors.
   - The location, size and type of all egress windows.
   - The location of all required tempered windows.
   - The location and size of the attic access.
   - The locations and types of any fireplaces.

3. A **Floor-Framing Plan** that includes the type, size, spacing and location of all joists, beams, posts, bearing walls and bearing pads. If you are using an engineered floor system (TJI's, BCI's, etc.) it must be accompanied by a plan designed by an individual certified to do such designs.

4. **Exterior Elevations** of all four sides of the structure.

5. A **Roof-Framing Plan** that includes the type, size, spacing and location of all trusses, rafters, beams, posts and bearing walls. If you are using trusses a layout showing all truss locations will be required.

6. **Cross Sections** that include the following information:
   - The size and type of all materials to be used.
   - The rise, run and headroom clearance of the stairways.
   - The height, location and details for all required handrails.
   - The height, location and details for all required guardrails.
   - Details for masonry fireplaces including the size, type and spacing of all materials to be used.
   - Details for Energy code compliance. Be sure to include a completed energy code worksheet and be sure that the credit choices with descriptions are printed on the building plans.

7. A **Grading Plan**

8. A **Site Plan** (Follow the instructions on the City of Kelso site plan form.)

This is a general guideline for submittals. More information may be required after the review process.