

## Who can obtain a Building Permit?

Application for a building permit shall be made by the owner or lessee of the structure or agent of either, or by the licensed architect, professional engineer, contractor or subcontractor (or their respective agents) employed in connection with the proposed work. If the application is made by the contractor or subcontractor (or any of their respective agents), the building official shall verify that the applicant is either licensed and certified to practice in Virginia, or is exempt from licensing under the Code of Virginia.

It is your responsibility if you are acting as your own general contractor to see that the appropriate permits are obtained for your project. If you are hiring a licensed subcontractor, he must obtain the plumbing, mechanical, or electrical permit in his name, but it is up to you to make sure that he does.



In order to properly assist you, the Building and Zoning Office needs to research your property, review the building plans, and go out to the property in some cases to observe just where the structure will be placed. The average time frame to wait for a building permit is anywhere from 10-14 business days. Some cases even longer depending on the project.

A licensed contractor is an independent businessman or woman who builds or repairs home or other structures. They are building trade professionals whose usual method of operation is to make a bid for a job and then to perform the work according to the bid price and the contract documents.

“General” contractors do work that requires the use of two or more unrelated trades (for example, building a room addition that requires a carpenter for structural work and an electrician for wiring). If you have decided to be your own general contractor, you still might want to hire “specialty” contractors to be responsible for the code-related structural, electrical or plumbing they usually act as subcontractors or “subs” who sign a contract with the general contractor to do specialty trade work.



One of the best ways to finding the right contractor for your job is talking to people who have done business with them. Lumber dealers, hardware people, architects and bankers work with contractors in your area. Do not ask the inspectors for this information. They are prohibited from making recommendations.

Other good references, of course, are friends, neighbors, and relatives who have had work done on their homes. They will be able, for better or worse, to tell you about “their” contractor. These types of references are best because good contractors rely heavily on word of mouth references from satisfied customers and business associates.

After you have found a contractor with good references, the next step is finding out if he is legally licensed. His advertisement in the Yellow Pages should have his license number. When you go see him ask “May I please see your pocket license?” Make sure it has not expired. You may also contact the Better Business Bureau to see if anyone had filed a complaint about a particular contractor’s performance. For fairness sake, ask if the problem has been resolved and whether the complaint seemed justified.

## How do I obtain a Building Permit?

### Gloucester County Codes Compliance

Building Office  
6582 Main Street  
P.O. Box 329

Gloucester, VA 23061

(804)-693-2744 Fax (804)-693-7037

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- ◆ Why do I need inspections?



Building Official; Paul Koll  
Building Inspector; Tom Hodges  
Combination Inspector; George Seely  
Combination Inspector; Anthony McMahan  
Permit Technician; Celeste DeSimone

[www.gloucesterva.info/codes](http://www.gloucesterva.info/codes)

## Why do I need a Building Permit?

There are several advantages in doing home improvement projects with a building permit. The primary one is that getting a permit brings you the services of the building inspector. The inspector approves each phase of the construction process, checking to see that work is done safely and properly. Inspectors also can advise you on how to proceed if you get stuck.

Secondly, there are legal and financial liabilities that you face when you don't get a permit. Work without a permit is illegal and can pose serious complications for you when you try to sell your house. Any fire and homeowner's insurance you have may be invalidated if you do work without a permit. If there is a fire in your house, the insurance company may use the illegal work as a reason not to pay on your claim.

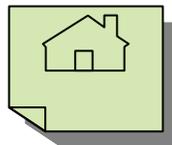


*If you are in doubt as to whether or not a permit is required or have any questions, call the building office at*

**(804)-693-2744.**

## What do I need to do to obtain a Building Permit?

1. If the project involves 2500 or more sq. ft. of land disturbance, a land disturbance permit is required. Remember this also includes the area for a new drain field, well and driveway. Along with the land disturbance application, a construction permit from the Health Department and a photocopy of the plat of the property from the Circuit Court is needed.
2. While applying for a land disturbance permit you may want to also apply for your zoning approval. Along with a zoning application you will also need a copy of your plat of property or deed and a copy of the health permit. Zoning approval is required if there is some sort of extension or addition to your home and/or a new accessory structure or dwelling. The purpose for the zoning application is to inform us to where on your property the construction will take place. From the zoning application the zoning office will be able to determine what the property is zoned and if the proposed use is permitted and if your project will meet the required setbacks.
3. Once the land disturbance and zoning application are approved, the building official will then review the building application and the building plans. Along with the application, a copy of the Health permit and Shrink Swell Report done by a soil scientist is also needed for a new dwelling. Two sets of building plans are required, one copy will remain on file in building office and the other will be returned to the applicant, stamped for approval if approved. Then once the building permit is paid for in full, the permit will be issued and you may then begin your project.



## How do I know if I need a Building Permit?



A written application for a permit shall be made to the Building Official and an approved permit issued by the Official before any of the following actions may be commenced:

commenced:

1. Constructing, enlarging, altering, or demolishing a structure.
2. Changing the use of a structure either within the same use group or to a different use group when the new use requires greater degrees of structural strength, fire protection, exit facilities, ventilation or sanitary provisions.
3. Installing or altering any equipment which is regulated by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.
4. Removing or disturbing any asbestos or lead containing materials during demolition, alteration, renovation of or additions to structures.
5. Moving a lot line which affects an existing structure's continued compliance with the building regulations under which it was built.

## Why do I need inspections?

As you complete particular sections of your construction, say the wiring or the plumbing, you must call to schedule the required inspection before proceeding to the next phase of building. Otherwise, you may be required to tear down one portion of your work to show visible proof that a concealed section is up to code.