

A CUSTOMER GUIDE TO THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

We have designed this guide with the newcomer to the permit process in mind. It details the steps involved in obtaining a building permit – from preliminary review through final approval. This information will help people who have had little or no experience with the building permit process. Experienced building professionals will also find information about the required amount of processing time useful for their scheduling.

Building Permits: When are they required?

Generally, you need to obtain a building permit from the City whenever you construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove, improve, convert, or demolish a building or other structure. A building could be anything from a tool shed to a house. Additionally, code violations are generally required to obtain a permit to correct violations including minor property maintenance violations. A Building Permit may include building, grading, plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits. The City processes the various permit types required as one total package. If you have a question about permit requirements for your project, call the Building & Safety Division at 781-7180.

Preliminary Review: Before you apply

We encourage you to call or visit us before you submit your building permit application. We will answer your questions and let you know if your proposed project is within the City's development guidelines. You may be referred to other staff members to determine if your project will require any Planning approvals before you can apply for a building permit. Approval may require action by the Architectural Review Commission or the Planning Commission. Our office is located at 919 Palm St. beneath the parking garage.

If your project will require approval through a planning process, you must file a separate planning application and pay required fees to the Planning Department. Those fees are separate from the building permit fees. Planning approvals must be granted before you are allowed to apply for a building permit.

You may also want to discuss your project with the Public Works Department, the Fire Department, or the Health Department to determine if there will be any special requirements. Staff may suggest ideas to make the building permit process easier for you. Asking us questions at the outset may save you processing time. We're glad to take the time to help you – it's part of why we are here.

Do You Need to Hire a Professional? Ask us.

The City is committed to explaining the process as clearly and concisely as possible. However, the permit process can be complex, even for those experienced with it.

Depending on the size and type of your project, you may need the services of a licensed professional. In fact, State law may require that a portion or your entire project be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer. Our best advice is to check with the staff in the Building & Safety Division to determine if the services of a licensed professional will be needed.

Applying for a Permit

You may apply for a building permit when the plans for your proposed project are complete and Planning approvals, if required, are granted. To apply you must turn in an **application package** at the **Building & Safety Division** of the City's **Community Development Department**, consisting of:

- ❖ Completed application, checklist and related forms
- ❖ The plan review deposit
- ❖ Copies of required plans
- ❖ Supporting documentation (structural, energy, soils analysis)

The application packet is available at the Building & Safety Division counter, as well as on-line in the Forms link of our website at www.slocity.org. The information included on the plans and the number of copies will vary, depending on the specifics of your project. Please choose the appropriate construction application checklist that matches your scope of work from one of the six provided at the end of this guide.

Please note, you will be required to pay a plan check fee, or in most cases, pay a plan review deposit that will be credited towards the plan check fee. The entire plan review fee must be paid prior to final review of application documents.

The Review Process: What happens next?

After your application is submitted, we will review your plans. Depending on the nature of the project, the review could involve several departments. The Building & Safety Division will determine compliance with building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, energy conservation, disabled access compliance, Greenbuild codes and storm water control regulations. The Fire Department will check for compliance with fire safety requirements. The Public Works Department will check for compliance with flood control, drainage, parking and driveway standards and public improvement requirements. The Planning Division will verify compliance with zoning regulations including authorized uses within zoning districts, required parking, and property development standards such as lot coverage, building height, setback, and density requirements. The Utilities Department will review for water conservation and waste management objectives.

Obtaining a Permit: How long will it take?

The City reviews applications on a first-come, first-served basis. However, we are committed to processing your plans as quickly and efficiently as possible. The City's goal is to complete the initial plan check within the following time frames:

Category	Initial Plan Check Time	Project Examples
Minor Commercial Projects/Residential Projects	4 weeks	Non-structural tenant improvements, residential remodels and additions, single family homes
Moderate Projects	6 weeks	Structural tenant improvements, commercial additions up to 5,000 SF, changes of occupancy
Major Projects	8 weeks	New commercial buildings

Corrections, Clarifications, and Changes

The Building & Safety Division will notify you when the initial plan review for your project is completed. If the plans cannot be approved as submitted, we will provide you with lists of necessary corrections from all departments that reviewed your plans.

Minor corrections can be made on the original plans submitted. However, if major changes are necessary, or if there are numerous corrections, you will be required to correct the base drawings and resubmit copies of the revised plans. Submitting thorough and complete plans initially will help avoid numerous revisions.

When revised plans are submitted, they will be distributed to the departments that generated the initial corrections for subsequent review. Plans submitted for recheck will generally require less processing time than required for the initial check. The City's goal is to process rechecks within two weeks for minor projects, three weeks for moderate projects and four weeks for major projects.

Issuing the Permit

After the City determines that the plans satisfy all code requirements, you will be notified of the approval and asked to pay all remaining fees. Upon payment, we will issue a building permit. You can then begin construction.

Inspections

We will inspect your project as work progresses. You will be given an "Inspection Record" card with the permit, and you must have the inspection card and the approved plans available during all inspections. The card must be signed by an inspector after each phase of your project is completed, but before you begin the next phase. Building & Safety Division staff will conduct an inspection on any weekday you request, **provided you call 781-7180 to request an inspection by at least 5:00 p.m. THE DAY BEFORE you wish the inspection to take place.**

Completing Your Project

Although it is essential that you complete the inspection process, you do not have to finish your project during any fixed time period. From the day you pick up the permit, you are allowed 180 days (six months) to begin work on your project. Once construction begins, you must continue to work on your project to avoid permit expiration. When work is completed, you must obtain approvals from all departments listed on the “Blue Card” before final inspection by the Building & Safety Division. With final approval, we will authorize “utility releases” allowing electricity and gas services to be connected and provide a certificate of occupancy, if one is required for your project.

Why is the permit process so complex?

The process of issuing a building permit may seem complex, which it is. It involves many City departments and outside agencies, and it may include a separate Planning process. The City is required by law to enforce numerous Federal, State and local construction and development regulations to insure that your project is safe and is an asset to the community. We have provided a flow chart which is intended to help you understand this complex process.

City phone numbers to keep handy:	Building & Safety Division	781-7180
	Planning Division	781-7170
	Public Works Department	781-7015
	Fire Department	781-7380
	Utilities Department	781-7215