



Residential Building Permit Application Procedures and Requirements For One- and Two-Family Dwellings

Bureau of Permits and Inspections

Policy 10-02

for public distribution

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The following information is meant to help you understand the permitting process, and to assist you with the preparation of plans and construction documents required for residential building permit applications.

The City of Richmond, Bureau of Permits and Inspection is responsible for the enforcement of all codes concerning new construction, additions, alterations, repairs, removal, demolition, occupancy and maintenance of all buildings and structures located within the City of Richmond.

Adopted Building Codes:

As you all know, the Commonwealth of Virginia is one of the oldest states in the United States of America. The history of our building codes goes back to the late 1800's, and the first building codes were established in the early 1900's. Since then they have grown in to many divisions and types, but lately because of the need for uniformity and continuity all these divisions have incorporated to one national recognizable Building Code Council. The International Code Council has produced the most comprehensive code standards to date.

Currently the applicable code for one- and two-family dwellings is the International Residential Code (IRC) 2006, adopted by Virginia on May 1, 2008.

It is our desire that home builders and homeowners will benefit from this handout. We recognize that coming to City Hall for a permit can be a bit challenging. The City of Richmond, under new leadership, has emphasized the importance of achieving a fast, efficient and predictable permitting process without compromising the quality of life, health, and safety of our citizens.

This guide is intended to aid you in starting the permit process. You will find useful information regarding the code requirements, plans requirements, fee requirements, and many other resources available to you as you start the construction of your new home, home improvement, addition, and/or repair. Our city has been recognized as a city with great neighborhoods & monuments and preserving these qualities is the responsibility for all.

If you have any questions that this guide has not answered, please do not hesitate to contact us. The City of Richmond, Bureau of Permits and Inspections staff are here to assist you in understanding the rules and regulations that apply to your project.

We look forward to serving you.

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Site Plan Review & Approval

Prior to the issuance of a building permit by the Bureau of Permits & Inspections, information concerning zoning regulations must be obtained from Department of Planning and Zoning within the City of Richmond, Department of Community Development. Each parcel of property within the City of Richmond is part of a designated zoning district. The zoning district specifies the permitted land uses, such as residential, commercial or industrial, and the minimum distances or setbacks from the property lines for buildings, accessory structures, fences as well as maximum height restrictions. If the permit request is for new construction, architectural design and landscaping standards may apply to the property or project.

Plans Submittal and Building Permit Application

To submit plans for your proposed construction work, you will need to complete a building permit application and pay the plan review or submittal fees. The application will require such information as the project's street address; description of the work; the estimated construction value including labor & materials; name, address & home number of the owner; contactor's name, address, phone number & license number; architect/engineer name, address, & phone number; and contact person's name, phone number & address.

Plans which are incomplete, defaced, illegible or faded will not be accepted. Applicants whose projects are located in a historical district or a flood zone must also submit plans and receive approval from the City of Richmond, Planning and/or Permits & Engineering Services divisions prior to starting the application process.

Minimum Requirements for Building Plans

Plans should be blue/black lined or photocopied on substantial paper a minimum of **18"x24"**. The minimum **scale** used on most architectural plans is **1/8"- 1'-0"**. Civil and site plans can be plotted a smaller scale, such as **1"=30'**. All architectural and engineering plans shall be sealed and signed by a certified professional architect or engineer responsible for the design and licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, except where exempted by the Uniform Statewide Building Code 2006 edition.

Building Permit Requirements and Exemptions

There are relatively few construction items that can be constructed without a permit. Items where permits are required and those that are exempt are listed below.

Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code Section 108 Application for Permit

108.1 When Applications Are Required. Except as specified in **Section 108.2** , no building, structure or building service equipment regulated by this code and the adapted amendments shall be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, removed, converted, or demolished unless a separate, appropriate permit for each building, structure or building service equipment has first been obtained from the building official.

108.2 Exemptions from Application for Permit. Notwithstanding the requirements of **Section 108.1**, application for a permit and any related inspections shall not be required for the below listed items. Exemption from the permit requirements of this code (USBC) shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in violation of the provisions of the USBC or any other law and ordinances of City of Richmond jurisdiction.

1. Installation of wiring and equipment that (i) operates at less than 50 volts, (ii) is for network powered broadband communications systems, or (iii) is exempt under Section 102.3(1), except when any such installations are located in a plenum, penetrate fire rated or smoke protected construction or are a component of any of the following.

- 1.1. Fire alarm system.
- 1.2. Fire detection system.
- 1.3. Fire suppression system.
- 1.4. Smoke control system.
- 1.5. Fire protection supervisory system.
- 1.6. Elevator fire safety control system.
- 1.7. Access or egress control system or delayed egress locking or latching system.
- 1.8. Fire damper.
- 1.9. Door control system.
2. Detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses or similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 150 square feet (14 m²) and the structures are not accessory to a Group F or H occupancy.
3. Detached pre-fabricated buildings housing the equipment of a publicly regulated utility service, provided the floor area does not exceed 150 square feet (14 m²).
4. Tents or air-supported structures, or both, that cover an area of 900 square feet (84 m²) or less, including within that area all connecting areas or spaces with a common means of egress or entrance, provided such tents or structures have an occupant load of 50 or less persons.
5. Fences and privacy walls not part of a building, structure or of the barrier for a swimming pool, provided such fences and privacy walls do not exceed six feet in height above the finished grade. Ornamental post caps shall not be considered to contribute to the height of the fence or privacy wall and shall be permitted to extend above the six feet height measurement.
6. Retaining walls supporting less than two feet of unbalanced fill. This exemption shall not apply to any wall impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids or supporting a surcharge other than ordinary unbalanced fill.
7. Swimming pools that have a surface area not greater than 150 square feet (13.95 m²), do not exceed 5,000 gallons (19 000 L) and are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep.
8. Signs under the conditions in Section H101.2 of Appendix H.
9. Replacement of above-ground existing LP-gas containers of the same capacity in the same location and associated regulators when installed by the serving gas supplier.
10. Ordinary repairs that include the following.
 - 10.1. Replacement of windows and doors that are not required to be fire rated in Group R-2 where serving a single dwelling unit and in Groups R-3, R-4 and R-5.
 - 10.2. Replacement of plumbing fixtures in all groups without alteration of the water supply and distribution systems, sanitary drainage systems or vent systems.
 - 10.3. Replacement of general use snap switches, dimmer and control switches, 125 volt-15 or 20 ampere receptacles, luminaries (lighting fixtures) and ceiling (paddle) fans in Group R-2 where serving a single dwelling unit and in Groups R-3, R-4 and R-5.
 - 10.4. Replacement of mechanical appliances provided such equipment is not fueled by gas or oil in Group R-2 where serving a single family dwelling and in Groups R-3, R-4 and R-5.
 - 10.5. Replacement of an unlimited amount of roof covering or siding in Groups R-3, R-4 or R-5 provided the building or structure is not in an area where the design (3 second gust) wind speed is greater than 100 miles per hour (160 km/hr) and replacement of 100 square feet (9.29 m²) or less of roof covering in all groups and all wind zones.
 - 10.6. Replacement of 100 square feet (9.29 m²) or less of roof decking in Groups R-3, R-4 or R-5 unless the decking to be replaced was required at the time of original construction to be fire-retardant-treated or protected in some other way to form a fire-rated wall termination.
 - 10.7. Installation or replacement of floor finishes in all occupancies.
 - 10.8. Replacement of Class C interior wall or ceiling finishes installed in Groups A, E and I and replacement of all classes of interior wall or ceiling finishes in other groups.
 - 10.9. Installation of replacement cabinetry or trim.
 - 10.10. Application of paint or wallpaper.
 - 10.11. Other repair work deemed by the building official to be minor and ordinary which does not adversely affect public health or general safety.

Exception: Application for a permit may be required by the building official for the installation of replacement siding, roofing and windows in buildings within a historic district designated by a locality pursuant to Section 15.2-2306 of the Code of Virginia.

BUILDING PLANS

The following construction documents are required when submitting a building permit application for a new building, addition, alteration, repair, change of use, and/or demolition.

All submitted plans must include the following information.

1. **Site Plan or Survey:** The information needed on your site plan or survey includes such items as property lines, location of existing or proposed structures or additions, decks, driveways, walkways and easements. The site plan or survey should indicate the dimensions of structures and the distance of structures to adjacent property lines.

2. Footing /Foundation Plan:

- Provide dimensioned footing and foundation plans
- Show the size, depth and location of the footing and/or slab-on-grade
- Show the location, size and spacing of anchor bolts
- Show the location, size, spacing and clearances for all reinforcement
- Show the location and size of foundation ventilation
- Show the location and size of the crawl space access door
- Show floor framing layout for the first floor including the location and size of any girders, beams and columns, and location of any interior bearing walls or cripple walls
- Show a typical section through the footing and foundation

3. Floor Plans:

- Provide one floor plan for each floor including the basement
- Show the location and sizes of all doors, windows, and openings, included glass and glazing and any fire requirements of any doors and windows, if required
- Show the sizes and designated use for each room Show the location of all appliances and fixtures, such as oven, range, water heater, washer and dryer, air condition and heating units
- Show the location of any decks, porches, stairs (interior and exterior)
- Show the location of the fireplaces (wood burning, gas or gas logs)
- Show the location and type of all plumbing, mechanical, and electrical fixtures, wiring and type

4. Framing:

- Provide separate framing plans for each floor, and roof
- Show all framing members, joists, studs, rafter, beams, girders, headers, columns,

including their sizes, spacing, and grades of lumber

- Show details and sections for each type of wall and their connection and point of support (For example if the front of the house will have a brick veneer and the other sides will have wood siding then two wall sections would be required)
- If you are using any Trusses or Engineered Lumber such as Laminated Beams or Wood I-Joists then submit two copies of certified plans and detailed structural information.
- Show the types and number of fastenings.
- Show all locations of bracing panels on floor plan, and describe the method of bracing for each location, and shear panel types and fastening, and hold downs location and requirements.

5. Exterior and Interior finishes:

- Show the type, and size of material used for interior and exterior finishes (siding, bricks, dryvit, stucco for exterior, and drywalls, paneling, stone, ceramics, for interior)

6. Elevations:

- Show the Right Side, Left Side. Front and Back Elevations with all windows, and doors and any other exterior features

Our office has basic fill-in-the-blank details for different types of exterior wall sections, decks, porches and ramps. These may be helpful to you in preparing your construction documents. These can be obtained at City Hall, 900 E. Broad Street, Room 110 or calling us and having them faxed to you.

Building Permit Submission Requirements

The following information is required to be submitted with your building permit for all new residential construction. Without this information your permit application will not be processed and may delay the issuance of your permit and start of your project.

New Building:

1. A completed permit application with all required information
2. Five (5) completed sets of project building plans
3. Five (5) copies of certified site plan
4. Two (2) sets of specification
5. Two (2) sets of soil reports

Addition:

1. A completed permit application with all required information
2. Three (3) completed sets of project building plans
3. Three (3) copies of certified site plan
4. Two (2) sets of specifications
5. Two (2) sets of soil reports

Alteration and Repair:

1. A completed permit application with all required information
2. Two (2) completed sets of building project plans
3. Two (2) sets of specifications

Demolition:

1. A completed demolition permit application with all required information
2. Two (2) sets of site plans, and grading plans for before and after
3. Two (2) sets of demolition schedules

Permits & Engineering Services

The City of Richmond, Permits & Engineering Services section within the Bureau of Permits and Inspections issues a variety of permits which include:

Encroachment Permits

An encroachment permit is required whenever work is done within a public right-of-way or easement, or that impacts a public facility. Examples of work requiring an encroachment permit are as follows:

1. Repairing or installing curb, gutter and/or sidewalks adjacent to a City of Richmond Street.
2. Widening or installing a driveway cut or apron. Connecting a private on-site storm drain line to a public storm drain system.
3. Installing any awning, canopy or sign over any public right-of-way such as a sidewalk or street.

There is a processing and inspection fee for encroachment permits, along with requirements for insurance and bonding. For additional information on encroachment permits call Mr. Herbert Harding @ 804-646-3695

Grading Permits

A grading permit is required for all residential and commercial subdivision and land development. As well as grading activities requested prior to the overall approval of construction documents and subdivision improvement and development agreements. These permits can be obtained from the Bureau of Permits and Inspections.

There is a processing and inspection fee for grading permits, along with requirements for insurance and bonding. For additional information on grading permits call Mr. Herbert Harding @ 804-646-3695

Plan Distribution/Tracking System

After submitting your building application and construction documents to the counter permit intake technician he/she will review your documents for accuracy and minimum requirements and assign different tracking numbers to your application. These numbers represent different departments or divisions within the Bureau of Permits and Inspections as well as outside agencies who will be reviewing your permit. These numbers will differ for each permit based on the location, type, and size of the project such as new, alteration, repair, and additions.

Each set of plans that you submit will be routed to one of the reviewing agencies. This allows for simultaneous review of your permit application by all interested agencies.

Permit Fees

The next step in this process will be the collection of fees. The City of Richmond permit fees are based on construction value by the R. S. Means Estimating System which has been programmed into our computer systems. You will be informed of the amount at the cashier counter. To avoid any delays we advise you to call our intake associates and obtain an estimate of fees based on the type of construction and size of your project. They can be reached Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. @ 311

Plan Review and Examination of Construction Documents

The plan review and examination of construction documents is a technical review of your plans. Depending on the size and type of project, your plans will be reviewed by some or all of the following agencies and division within the Department of Community Development and Bureau of Permits and Inspections, as well as other departments and bureaus within the City of Richmond:

- Building
- Zoning Planning
- Public Works
- Permits & Engineering Services
- Utilities

Each of the above department, bureau, and agencies review plans in accordance with codes, ordinances, regulations and standards applicable to its specific area of responsibility.

You can check the status of the review of your permit by using our Spanlink system at 646-0770 or on-line at the City of Richmond website on the Community Development page using the Permits Web Inquiry button.

Resubmission and Corrected Plans

If any agencies do not approve your permit application and construction documents, you will receive plan review comments and notification by the mail, fax or e-mail of the deficiencies. Revise and correct the deficiencies on your plans and construction documents and resubmit them. Please submit them to our intake permit staff with resubmittal form, and not directly to the individual agencies, to be sure they are tracked correctly. This process will continue until all the agencies have approved the application and construction documents.

Building Permit Issuance or Rejection

After all agencies have completed their reviews, all approved or denied applications and constructions documents will be returned to the intake center in the Bureau of Permits and Inspections. The approved construction documents will be stamped and dated as approved in two sets, one set as builder copy and one set as office copy. The builder set with signed permit, and inspection manual will be placed at the intake counter for you to pick up. This set must be kept on the building site and the inspector must have access to this set while the structure is under construction. The office copy will be kept on file in our office for a minimum of 1 year after completion of the project. The rejected construction document will go through same process and one copy remains with intake staff for filing and the other sets will be returned to you.

Inspections

Once construction plans and documents have been approved and proper permits have been issued, the work may begin. To schedule an inspection you can call 646-0770. The automated system will guide you through its process. You can also schedule inspections on-line at the City of Richmond website on the Department of Community Development page using the Permits Web Inquiry button. All inspection requests can be made 24 hours a day. The automated system will ask you for your building permit number and three digit inspection code, these codes are listed in our inspection manual. Please note that all building inspections must be scheduled before 5 p.m the day before the inspection appointment. To find out your inspection time please call your assigned inspector in the morning of your scheduled inspection between hours of 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

To cancel an inspection and avoid a possible re-inspection fee (See Building Inspection Fees) please call your inspector or the Bureau of Permits and Inspection office @ 311 by 10:00 a.m. the day of the inspection.

Permit Expiration

If your permit has expired, or is nearing its expiration date you can file an Application for Permit Extension. This form can be obtained at the intake counter or online under the City of Richmond website on the Department of Community Development page under Forms.

Plans Revision Process

Every building must be constructed as per approved plans and construction documents by the City of Richmond Bureau of Permits and Inspections. If any changes or revisions in the actual project construction are proposed, those changes will need to be reviewed and approved by the City of Richmond Bureau of Permits and Inspection before initiation and incorporation of the work.

All revisions must be signed and sealed by the architect, engineer, contractor, or owner of the original submittal. The applicant must submit a complete Revision Application and enough copies of plans and information plus the associated fees to the intake permit processing center for review and re-tracking of the project to original divisions and departments as may be necessary.

Contact Information

- Call the City of Richmond 311 Call Center to reach the Bureau of Permits and Inspections
- The City of Richmond, Department of Community Development's web page is at www.ci.richmond.va.us/departments/communityDev/
- The International Code Council website is www.iccsafe.org

- The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development website is www.dhcd.virginia.gov



Permits and Inspection

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Committed to Building a Better Richmond Together

Reference Documents for this Policy:

2006 International Residential Code
For
One- and Two- Family Dwellings

Table with 4 columns: Important Phone Numbers, Electrical Plans, Mechanical Plans, Housing Code, Environmental Code, Permits for, Zoning, and Fax Number. Includes contact information for various services and a note about the SPANLINK system.