

**Chester
Building Official
Code Enforcement**

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WHEN DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

You need to obtain a building permit for all new construction and additions or when altering or renovating existing buildings. You generally do not have to obtain a building permit to make minor repairs although there are exceptions to this rule. Additions, finishing an attic or basement, or changing interior walls are examples of alterations that do require a building permit. In addition most exterior additions such as a deck, pool, shed, garage or other additions all require a building permit. The following types of work require a building permit:

- New construction - new additions
- Replacement of septic system
- Alteration and renovation of an existing building
- An addition to an existing building
- A change in use of a building
- Change to or the installation of a heating system
- Removal or cutting of any structural beam or bearing support
- Removal or change of any required means of egress
- Work affecting structural or fire safety
- Work that increases the non conformity of an existing building
- Work that affects public health or safety

The following is a list of common projects needing a Building Permit:

Storage sheds, gazebos, swimming pools, generators, fireplace, hot tubs, decks, basement re-finish, room or house additions, garages, plumbing work, electrical work, furnace replacement and HVAC installations, and generally all types of major alterations and remodeling. Any fences greater than 6 feet in height and all retaining walls higher than 4 feet high would also require permitting.

This list may not include all projects needing permits. If in doubt - simply contact the building inspector's office and inquire as to the need for a permit. Before starting any project, please, contact the Building Inspector to find out whether a permit is required for your project. Fines may be charged for all work started without a proper permit.

Consult Building Permit Applications Procedure at www.chesternh.org

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO APPROVE A PERMIT APPLICATION?

Most projects take 1-3 days for plan and zoning review. Some projects however may take longer. Once reviewed and approved you will be contacted to pick-up your plans, at that time you will be required to pay all fees associated with your project.

Chester Zoning Ordinance, Article 10, Section 10.3.3 requires that..."No building permit application will be approved and issued until public notice of the application has been posted at the Town Hall for a period of 7 days"... so while your permit may be reviewed in a shorter period of time a building permit cannot be issued for a period of 7 days.

If your application is denied you will be told why and what you need to provide for approval. Once approved, you will be issued a building permit and given a building permit card.

WHAT DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERMITS MIGHT BE REQUIRED?

New Construction Building Permits
Additions & Renovations Building Permits
Service or electrical changeovers
Generator installations
Plumbing Permits
Electrical Permits
Mechanical Permits*
Oil Burner Permits*
Demolition Permits
Chimney Permits
Solid Fuel Burning Permits* (wood and pellet stoves)
Propane Tank Placements* (generally taken out by your provider)
*Some permits are obtained through the Chester Fire Department

In addition driveway permits are required for any new or altered driveways. These permits are obtained through the building official. An approved driveway permit is required prior to issuing a building permit for new units.

Septic system plans and permits are obtained through the Department of Environmental Services and are required prior to issuing a building permit when a new build is involved. Prior to submission to the State the local building inspector requires a review and sign-off.

WHAT IS THE FEE FOR A BUILDING PERMIT?

Building permits are based on an estimated and calculated cost of construction and the rates are adjusted from time to time. Different rates are set for living space, garage, storage and decks and are calculated based on square footage of the project. Specific trade and utility permits have a flat application fee. A building permit fee schedule is available at the Chester Town Hall or you may consult www.chesternh.org.

HOW IS A BUILDING PERMIT OBTAINED?

Contact the Building Inspector during posted business hours or make appointments otherwise or simply pick up a building permit application from the town hall. For all major projects it is suggested that you meet with the building inspector before you start your project.

ARE THERE ANY PRIOR APPROVALS REQUIRED?

If applicable - For all major building permit applications you will need an approved driveway permit and an approved state septic system approval before a building permit can be issued; other regulation and code approvals may apply depending on the complexity of your project.

All elements of zoning ordinance must be in compliance before a permit can be issued - unless the applicant has sought and been granted a variance or special exception through the Zoning Board. If the request is for multi-family (more than one or two-family) you will be required to get a site plan review approval from the planning board before a building permit can be issued. If the permit request involves a change of use you may be required to seek site plan review and approval prior to obtaining a building permit.

Fees schedules are available at www.chesternh.org.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO MAKE CONNECTION OF ELECTRICAL AND GAS UTILITIES

Chester requires that the building official inspect and sticker all utility services before connection. Public Service of New Hampshire and other providers are aware of this requirement. Gas (propane) service providers should also be aware of this requirement. You must first contact the building official for a final inspection and he/she will place an inspection sticker at the utility entrance for the service provider. Upon receiving the sticker you may then contact the utility to have them “hook up” your utility. This is required for electric and/or gas.

WHAT ARE THE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR A NEW BUILD?

Submissions for permits will vary depending on the application and type of permit; however generally the following detailed items (if applicable) may be needed to be included on your construction drawings are as follows: foundation plan, floor plan, wall sections, building elevations, floor framing plans, roof framing plans. Elements of the electrical planning, heating plans, plumbing plans, and energy planning are also generally needed to insure compliance to building codes. Include:

1. Site Plan-This is a drawing which shows your property with existing structures, easements, lot dimensions, setbacks, and any floor plan information. Draw to scale the proposed project on this drawing showing dimensions and distances to property lines. The application form provides space to for this diagram. Include location of existing buildings, septic, and wells.
2. Construction Drawings- the drawings will show how your project will be constructed. You or your contractor can draw most drawings.
3. For larger new builds you should expect to have to provide detail plans for most elements of the build.
4. All new construction requires an approved septic system plan and an approved driveway permit if applicable. All new construction requires an energy certification.

WHEN DO PROJECTS NEED AN ELECTRICAL PERMIT?

Any major renovations for new circuits or extension of an existing circuit, including kitchen, bath, basement remodeling, swimming pools, and hot tubs would likely require electrical permitting. The installation of generators requires an electrical permit. This could include installing, altering or extending any hard-wired electrical system. You do not need a permit to do work that would not physically "break" a circuit, such as repairing appliances cords or replacing a breaker or fuse. Anytime major electrical is involved an electrical permit is required. An electrical permit is required for all new builds in addition to the building permit.

WHEN DO PROJECTS NEED A PERMIT FOR PLUMBING WORK?

A permit is required to install, replace or even abandon plumbing fixtures -- such as toilets, sinks, water heaters, dishwashers OR to do any plumbing repairs that would break the seal on any waste delivery plumbing. Replacements in kind generally would not require a permit; however additions and modifications would. Anytime major plumbing is involved in the larger project a plumbing permit must also be obtained. A plumbing permit is required for all new builds in addition to the building permit.

WHEN DO PROJECTS NEED A PERMIT FOR MECHANICAL WORK?

When installing or changing any part of a heating or cooling system that has ductwork or which must be vented into any kind of chimney. Installation, alteration, or repair of gas piping between the supply and appliance (indoors or outdoors) requires permitting. Installation of new liquid propane service requires a permit; many times the service provider will pull the permit for the tank installations on your behalf. Anytime major mechanical is involved in the larger project a mechanical permit must also be obtained. A mechanical permit may be required for new builds in addition to the building permit.

WHAT INSPECTIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE PROJECT?

Each project is unique and requires various types of inspections. When you come in to pick-up your permit we will advise you of required inspections. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to contact the building inspector at the appropriate times for inspections. An “Inspection Schedule” is available online at www.chesternh.org. Generally an inspection is required prior to covering up any work.

HOW IS THE PERMIT CLOSED OUT

After all of the inspections pertaining to your project have been completed (see “Inspection Schedule” online at www.chesternh.org) contact the Building Inspector and arrange for a final inspection. This final inspection is required for all permits. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to insure that permits are closed in a timely fashion. You should look to receive your green copy, the Certificate of Occupancy, for your records when the Building Inspector performs the final inspections. Trade and Utility permits are closed at the time of final inspection for the work performed. The applicant/home owner is responsible to schedule the building inspector upon completion of all work and to insure proper closure of all permits.

WHAT IS THE “OCCUPANCY PERMIT” and WHEN IS IT ISSUED

An occupancy permit is issued for all new construction and major renovations upon completion of all work. The “Occupancy Permit” is the green copy of the issued building permit and is held by the building official until final inspections have been completed. This green copy is issued to you when the final inspections have been performed, any deficiencies have been successfully remedied, and the building is in compliance. Taken directly from the building codes – No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and no changes in the existing occupancy classification of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made until the building official has issued a certificate of occupancy – so the final “Occupancy Permit” is a most important step in closing the permit. You should retain the green copy for your records as this further validates compliances to the permitting process. The building official may grant a temporary occupancy before the completion of all work covered by the permit.