



# Do I Need A Permit For My Project?

This handout provides general information about the types of work that require a permit and those that do not **for one and two family dwellings**. As the owner of a one or two family dwelling, you can hire a licensed contractor to get the proper permits and complete the work, or in many cases, you can obtain permits and do the work yourself.

## Why do I need permits?

- Permits protect you, your family and your investment. (They are designed to help ensure that licensed contractors do the work when required.)
- Inspections ensure that work is done safely and meets minimum code requirements.
- Minor problems that could lead to costly repairs, liability and life/safety issues can be detected during inspections and brought to your attention before the situation worsens.
- When selling a property, the buyer, realtor, and/or lender may require that unpermitted work be corrected, properly permitted and inspected before closing.
- It is the law. State Building Code requires that permits be obtained for certain types of work.

## Where can I get a permit?

Permits are issued in the Linn County Planning and Building Department which is located on the first floor of the courthouse in Albany, or at the cities of: Brownsville, Halsey, Harrisburg, Lyons, Mill City, Millersburg, Scio, or Tangent.

*Linn County Courthouse*  
300 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Albany, OR 97321  
[www.co.linn.or.us](http://www.co.linn.or.us)  
(541) 967-3816

The Linn County office is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The intent of this handout is to identify various types of work associated with **one and two family dwellings** that may require a permit. This information is not all-inclusive, so please check with our office staff to discuss the scope of your project.

## Projects that require a building permit

- Build, demolish, or add a dwelling, room, garage, shed, carport, or other structure attached to an existing dwelling (porches or patio covers under 200 square feet that are attached may be exempt.)
- Build, demolish, or move any detached accessory structure that is more than 200 square feet in area or more than 10 feet high, measured from the floor to the top if the top plate. Accessory structures are also regulated under the LCC 934.
- Finish an existing attic, garage, or basement to create living or conditioned space.
- Create a new window or door opening, or widen the size of an existing opening.
- Move, remove, alter, or add interior wall(s) that are load bearing **or** creating habitable space.
- Replace roofing when the old roof and sheathing are removed and new sheathing is installed.
- Build or replace an exterior stairway that is more than 30 inches above grade (measured from any point within 36 inches horizontally of the stairway.)
- Pour a concrete sidewalk, slab, or driveway more than 30 inches above grade (measured from any point 36 inches horizontally) **or** over any story or basement.
- Build a retaining wall that exceeds 4 feet high, measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall **or** any retaining wall affected by the weight of an adjacent slope, nearby driveway or nearby structure, when affecting a structure, accessory parking, required accessible routes or egress to public way.
- Build, demolish, or alter deck more than 30 inches above grade (measured from any point 36 inches horizontally from the deck).
- Construct a fence more than 7 feet tall or 8 feet for open wire fences.
- Enclose an existing patio cover, porch, or carport (when over 200 square feet).
- Add or enlarge an attached unenclosed porch or patio cover with cumulative area greater than 200 square feet.
- Install a barrier around swimming pool.
- Ground mounted flagpoles, antennas, and similar items.

## **Projects that require a mechanical permit**

- Install or alter a heating or cooling system.
- Install a wood stove or fireplace insert.
- Install, alter, or repair gas piping between the meter and an appliance (indoors and outdoors).
- Install or remove fuel oil tank.
- Install or alter a ventilation system and/or hood.

## **Projects that require an electrical permit**

You must be both the owner and the occupant of the dwelling in order to do electrical work yourself. If the dwelling is intended for sale, lease, rent, or exchange in the near future, a licensed electrical contractor must do the work.

A permit required to:

- Install, change, or repair any hardwired electrical system.
- Run any additional wiring, put in an additional electrical outlet or light fixture, or change your fuse box to circuit breakers.
- Install or alter low-voltage systems such as security alarms, central vacuum systems, low-voltage lighting or phone systems.

## **Projects that require a plumbing permit**

- Repair, replace, relocate, or add to the piping system within your home.
- Install new plumbing fixtures such as toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, dishwashers, etc.
- Replace a water heater.
- Replace existing plumbing fixtures if the replacement involves concealed plumbing connections or alterations to existing piping.
- Install rain drains, dry wells, sewer lines, water lines, backflow prevention assemblies for lawn irrigation systems or cap a sewer.

Note: Adding a bathroom not only requires a plumbing permit, but may also require a building, electrical and/or mechanical permit.

## **Projects that require a site grading permit**

- Fill over 50 cubic yards.
- Excavation creating a slope over 4 feet high.
- Earthwork in a mapped natural resource area (wetland, riparian area, significant vegetation).
- Earthwork in a mapped natural hazard area (floodplain, landslide, slope over 15%).

## **Projects that require an erosion control permit**

- Disturb or expose 2,000 square feet or more of ground surface.

## **Projects that require zoning and/or site engineering review**

### **(Whether or not a building permit is required)**

- Build or install an accessory structure, to confirm the location on the site complies with zoning code requirements.
- Create a new or enlarged parking area or driveway, or pave a previously graveled parking area.
- Make any improvements required as a condition of your land use review approval (e.g. Conditional Use permit or Site Plan Review).
- Make any exterior alterations including site work such as constructing a patio or deck.
- Development activity that falls within mapped natural features or hazards (e.g. wetlands, riparian areas, geo-hazard areas and floodplain).
- Erect a fence that encroaches within a front yard area or near a stream or creek.
- Construction of a qualifying agricultural exempt building.
- Activities that alter or divert any existing drainage.

## **Projects that require a historic permit or review**

Any exterior alteration or improvement of a historic resource (e.g. demolition, re-roof, siding, new windows, deck, patio, fence, equipment install, AC/furnace, woodstove pipe) – requires a Historic Preservations Permits from the Planning Division, unless the alteration is specifically listed as exempt.

## **Work NOT requiring a building permit**

Some minor repairs and maintenance on one or two family dwellings do not require a building permit; however, regardless of whether a building permit is required, the project **must meet all** adopted constructions codes and Linn County Code Requirements.

### **Call (541) 967-3816 for more information**

- Install insulation in existing homes (except where knob and tube electrical wiring exists).
- Install window awnings, not more than 54-inches deep, supported only by an exterior wall and does not project beyond or within 3 feet of the property line.
- Replace nonstructural interior wall, floor or ceiling coverings (such as wallboard or sheet vinyl).
- Install shelving and cabinets.
- Install gutters and downspouts (a plumbing permit is still required for storm and water disposal).
- Replace or repair siding not required to be fire-resistive.
- Replace or repair roofing, if the existing sheathing is not removed, or installing a new roof over existing roofing (a maximum of three layers of roofing is allowed of the same material).
- Replace doors or windows if the existing openings are not widened (A Historic Preservation Permit is required in a historic district and for individually listed historic properties).
- Install swings and other similar play structures.
- Build a fence up to 7 feet high or 8 feet for open wire (check with Linn County to confirm setback and vision clearance).
- Pave a walkway on private property.
- Build a patio or deck that is not more than 30 inches above grade (measured from any point 36 inches horizontally) and is 5 feet or more from the property line.
- Build a patio or porch cover not over 200 square feet and supported by an exterior building wall.
- Build a shed or detached non-habitable accessory building not over 200 square feet in area and less than 10 feet in height measured from the floor to the top of the top plate.
- Repave driveways where no expansion has occurred.
- Replace plumbing fixtures that are not concealed within a wall or floor. Make emergency plumbing repairs, or replace freeze-damaged or leaking concealed plumbing pipes that are no more than 5 feet in length.

