

WHAT IS A BUILDING PERMIT?



Muscatine County Building, Zoning, & Environmental Office

3610 Park Avenue West, Muscatine, IA 52761-5634
Phone: 563-263-0482 Email: zoning@muscatinecountyiowa.gov
Website: www.muscatinecountyiowa.gov



What is a Building Permit?

A building permit gives you legal permission to start construction of a project.

Building Permits are valid for 1 year. If construction is not completed within 1 year of issuance, the permit is expired. A permit extension must be obtained in order for construction to continue.

When do you need a permit?

Permits are required for the following:

- a. New residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and public buildings.
- b. Residential building additions (living rooms, family rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, garages, etc.)
- c. Residential work or alterations (decks, garages, fireplaces, swimming pools, remodel projects, etc.)
- d. Residential renovations (garage conversions, finishing an unfinished basement, kitchen expansions, etc.)
- e. Commercial building additions, alterations, or renovations.
- f. Electrical services or wiring.
- g. Plumbing systems (drain, waste, vent, water) new or relocated.
- h. HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems.
- i. Accessory buildings greater than 200 square feet.
- j. Telecommunication transmission towers.

Permits are not required for the following:

- a. One-story detached accessory structures, provided the total area does not exceed 200 sq. ft.
- b. Painting, wall paper, and other similar finish work.
- c. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall.
- d. Door or window replacement (when window or door rough openings are not enlarged or relocated and additional framing is not involved).
- e. Exterior siding replacement or roof replacement.
- f. Electrical or plumbing fixture replacement.

Items listed above that do not require permits are still required to comply with the applicable codes and ordinances adopted by Muscatine County. Exemption from building permit requirements does not create or imply an exemption from the applicable model code or ordinance requirements.

Why should you obtain a building permit?

Your home or business is an investment. If your construction project does not comply with codes adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced. Property insurers may not cover work done without building permits and inspections. If a contractor is performing the work on your project, obtaining the proper building permit will help ensure that the quality of the contractor's work meets the minimum code requirements as adopted by the community.

Your permit also allows the building inspector to protect the public by reducing potential hazards of unsafe construction and ensuring public health, safety, and welfare. By following code guidelines, your completed project should meet minimum standards of safety and may be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future owners.

How to Obtain a Building Permit

1. Talk to Your Code Official

Our building inspectors want your project to be a success and will help you with potential problems that could cost you time and money. You will be asked some basic questions such as What are you planning to do? and Where? Permits cannot be issued until platted and/or lot split requirements have been met. Please make certain that these processes have been completed before applying for a permit.

Current Codes and local design criteria:

- 2015 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE
- 2015 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE
- 2024 UNIFORM PLUMBING CODE
- 2024 INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL CODE
- 2023 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE
- 2012 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE
- 2015 INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE

Frost depth – 42"

Seismic Design Category – A

Wind Speed – 115 m.p.h.

Ground Snow Load – 25 lb.

2. Submit an Application

A building permit application is required along with all necessary documentation such as a site plan or floor plan as applicable. You can check with the building department for the requirements for your project. For a list of plan requirements please refer to the Plan Requirements Handout.

3. Review Process

The building department will review your application and plans to ensure the project will follow the county's requirements. A building permit application may take up to five (5) business days to be processed.

4. Obtain a Building Permit

You will be contacted once a permit is ready for your project. A fee will be collected to cover the cost of the application and the review/inspection process. For a list of fees please refer to the **Fee Schedule**. Once you have obtained the permit, you then have legal permission to start construction.

5. Job Site Inspections

On-site inspections are required to make sure the work conforms to the permit, adopted building codes and plans. For a list of required inspections please see the **Inspections Required Handout**.

Inspections are performed between 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on weekdays. A 24-hour notice is required for inspection requests. Inspections with less than a 24-hour notice will be accommodated on a case by case basis. If inspections are not ready when the inspector arrives, a reinspection fee may be charged. To schedule an inspection, you can call the office at 563-263-0482 or email us at: zoning@muscatinecountyiowa.gov.

6. Final Approval

A final inspection is required for all building permits. The building department will provide documentation when construction is complete and code compliance is determined.