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DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Handout #01

Building or Improving? Do it Right!

Why do I need a permit?

According to the California Building Standards Code, no building or structure may be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, removed, converted, or demolished unless a separate permit for each building or structure has first been obtained from the Building Official. Permits are the way the State of California and the City of Covina regulate construction. This is designed to ensure that all construction in the city is safe. The safety of the occupants of buildings is the primary reason for having construction codes.

When is a construction permit required?

A construction permit is required for all new construction. In many cases, a permit is required for alteration, repair, or replacement of existing fixtures. A plumbing, electrical, or mechanical permit may be required for any addition or changes to a building's existing system. Common examples of projects requiring permits are:

- New homes and buildings
- Room additions
- Remodels, alterations, and repairs
- Demolition of any structure
- Decks and patio covers
- Re-roofing
- Siding
- Window and door replacements (see exception below)
- Fences over 6' in height
- Fireplaces and fireplace inserts
- Retaining walls over 4' in height
- Storage sheds over 120 square feet
- HVAC change out, upgrade, or alteration
- Electrical system repair, upgrade, or alteration
- Shower/tub enclosure replacements
- Water Heater change out
- Water/Sewer/Gas lines installation or repair
- Swimming pools and spas
- Swimming pool demolition

When is a construction permit NOT required?

Permits are not required for:

- One story, detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, etc., providing the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet.
- Fences less than 6 feet in height.
- Platforms, walkways, and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade, and not over any basement or story below.
- Painting, papering, and similar finish work.
- Retaining walls not over 4 feet in height, measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- Window replacements which do not otherwise enlarge or reduce an existing opening or require the removal of an exterior or interior finish material.

The City of Covina highly recommends hiring an appropriately licensed State of California contractor to obtain permits and to ensure success of your project. However, a home owner (Owner/Builder) can obtain construction permits as well. Contractors, as well as home owners, may authorize an agent to obtain building permits on their behalf by signing a City of Covina Authorization Letter. The authorization letter needs to be provided by the authorized agent at the time of building permit issuance.