

BUILDING DEPARTMENT'S FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are here to help!

It is the intent of the Kochville Township Building Department to help protect you against unscrupulous or unlicensed contractors as well as inform you of your rights and responsibilities during home renovation projects. This document is intended to help you understand and better utilize the services of the Building Department and to make you aware of the assistance we can offer. We have attempted to answer some of the most common questions that homeowners have when contemplating a renovation, addition, or new home. And, it is our job to make sure that any construction project that is undertaken meets the requirements of the Michigan Residential Code, or other codes in effect, whether the work is done by the homeowner or a contractor. We have included the information that we are commonly asked but we may not have answered all questions you might have. In that regard, we ask that you contact the township building department so we can better help you with any other questions you may have.

First, why do I need building permit?

Not only is it the law, but building permits can also protect you. With a building permit, you get the advice of the plan reviewer and inspectors who will approve each phase of your project, checking to see that the work is done in accordance with the Michigan Residential Code, Zoning laws and the approved plans. Additionally, a building permit is required to show compliance with sanitary, safety and welfare concerns, including required setbacks from property lines and adjacent structures.

Working without a permit, when a permit is required, can result in fines and can cause problems when you sell your home. More importantly, you lose the assurance that the work you're paying for is built to code, a minimum standard for safety.

When do I need to get a permit?

Permits are required for any new pools, structures, any new plumbing, electrical, mechanical and air conditioning work. Also, repair work such as a new roof, enlarging or reducing an opening for a new window, where minimum egress is required, new doors where the modification of the door framing is required; interior renovations, like knocking down a wall or altering or repairing the electrical or plumbing system, including the replacement of your hot water or gas appliance, all require a permit.

You do not need a permit when you install a ceiling fan on an existing pre-wired location, installing new cabinets, counter-tops, flooring, ceramic tile, painting, or replacing a toilet, sink or water faucet.

How do I get a building permit?

Building permits are issued in the name of the person performing the work. Only licensed contractors or owner/builders may obtain a permit. However, owners can perform unlimited repairs to a single-family residence for their own use and occupancy. If you hire a contractor and you are asked to pull the permit, this should be an immediate RED FLAG for you not to consider hiring the contractor. The only person responsible for the work being done is the person listed on the permit. Bad work, unfinished work, and other problems can and do occur and a homeowner that has their name on the permit is the only person held responsible, except in cases of fraud, which are outside of the building department's authority. So, if you have hired a contractor, he is responsible for obtaining the building permit. Before hiring a contractor, ask for a copy of

his/her builder's license. They are required to carry their wallet card and a reputable contractor will gladly supply this. You can also ask for proof of liability insurance and workmen's comp insurance if they employ other workers. Ask about other jobs they have done, a reputable contractor will be proud to show off their work. Doing this protects you.

In the end, even hiring a licensed builder is no guarantee. It is up to the homeowner to do the homework.

Do I need a license to do.....?

Generally, we suggest that you look at the definition of a Residential Builder and the list of specialty trades for a Residential Maintenance & Alteration Contractor to see what is definitely required to be licensed. However, over the years some specific services have been removed from the licensing law or rules. Here is a basic list of activities that indicate whether a license is required or not.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>License Requirements</u>
New Construction/remodeling of homes, apartment buildings, condos, etc.	Required
Carpentry	Required
Concrete	Required
Excavation	Required
Insulation work	Required
Masonry	Required
Painting & Decorating	Required
Siding	Required
Roofing	Required
Screen & Storm Sash	Required
Gutters	Required
Tile & Marble	Required
Demolitions	Required
Swimming Pools	Required
Replacement windows/doors / garage doors	Required
Laying wood floors	Required
Basement Waterproofing	Required
Drywall	Not Required
Fences	Not Required
Awnings	Not Required
Sewer and septic, water lines, sprinklers	Not Required
Pavers without mortar	Not Required
Asphalt paving	Not Required
House moving	Not Required
Carpeting and vinyl floors (not wood)	Not Required
Plaster and Lath	Not Required

Additionally, a handyman that performs work, **that is not** plumbing, mechanical, or electrical work related, and such work is less than \$600.00 including materials and labor, is not required to hold a license. Work shall not be divided so the division of the operation is made in contracts of amounts less than \$600.00 to evade the licensing law. Homeowners, living in the home they are working on, also are not required to hold a license.