

# Building Permit Basics

## Why do I need a building permit?

- Building permits help assure that buildings are constructed with safe and healthy practices in order to protect the occupants, neighbors, community, and first responders.
- Plan reviews help identify problems and overlooked items before construction begins, saving valuable assets and time.
- The inspection process helps insure that construction practices and current codes are being met. The final inspection and issuance of a certificate of occupancy help guarantee the building is safe and financial institutions often require them as proof of construction completion.
- You can avoid Stop Work Orders and potential penalties.

## When is a building permit required?

Typically any new structure, addition, remodel, deck, and electrical service upgrade will require a building permit. You may choose to open the No Permit Required line located on this page for specific information when a permit is not required. It is advised that you contact the building department at 228-4728, or 228-4737 if you have any questions.

## How do I navigate the building permit application process?

A completed building application form is required. The application can be obtained at the same site as this page. For your convenience, the application can be typed and printed from the website. The completed application must be submitted to the Borough Planning and Zoning office with three copies of the construction documents (plans) describing the proposed work. The size of the plans must be at least 11"x 17". The required plans are described on the building permit application, and are as follows:

- Site plan showing lot lines, bearings and distances, buildings, setbacks, streets etc. *An as built survey, or new survey is*

*recommended. You can check with the Borough Planning and Zoning office to see if they have one on file 228-6610.*

- Grading plan if new work changes the slope, elevations, or requires a retaining wall. *A site development permit may be required and can be obtained by calling the City public work department at 228-4727*
- Building plans to include: foundation, floor, roof, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing plans.
- Cross sections of the exterior wall from the bottom of the foundation through the roof, showing structural types of building materials with dimensions, spacing and connectors. (Additional sections and details may be required for complicated work.)

## When do I need a design professional?

Most commercial work requires the help of an architect, engineer, or both. New commercial structures, tenant improvements, additions and alterations will require stamped plans. *Calling 228-4728 can provide a list of local design professionals.*

Designers, owners, or contractors may submit residential plans, but a design professional or home designer is highly recommended due to the knowledge necessary to satisfy the structural and weather resistant plan review. The extreme environmental conditions we live in require additional information on the plans.

## Who can do the work?

Pursuant to State Statutes, you can act as a general contractor on a single project every two years, and perform the work personally, but if others will perform the work, you must hire a State licensed and bonded sub-contractor, possessing an administrator's license in their field of work. It is always suggested that you hire a professional contractor to perform the work, in order to avoid costly mistakes, a visit from the State Department of labor, and avoid personal liability issues. *A good resource is the local builders association 247-4903. (www.sealaskabuilders.com).*