Homeowner’s Building Permit Guide

City of Albuquerque

Planning Department, Building Safety Division

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# Introduction

Homeowners who are interested in making changes to their home or want to build a new home, usually have many questions about how to make their vision a reality. They may have questions on where to start or what is needed. Other questions may be about the rules and requirements that must be followed.

This guide is full of information to help answer some of the most common questions homeowner’s face when trying to make changes to their home.

# What type of work/project requires a permit?

It can be a daunting task to find out what type of work requires a permit. Below is some of the most common types of work/projects that require a permit:

* All construction, alterations, repairs, improvements, enlargements and conversions to an existing home
  + Including:
    - walls and fences over six (6) feet high (under six (6) feet – a permit from the Zoning Department is required
    - Re-Roofing
    - PV Solar System
* Any removal and demolition of buildings, structures or service equipment
* All new home construction

Specific information on permit requirements can be found in the Uniform Administrative Code, 2020 Edition, found on the website below:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/current-building-codes>

# What type of work/project does not require a permit?

It may also be helpful to understand what type of work does not require a permit. Below is a list of common construction work/projects which **DO NOT** require a permit:

1. One-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the building area does not exceed 120 square feet.
2. Exterior fences and freestanding masonry walls not over six feet high above grade on the lowest side.
3. Retaining walls, which do not have a difference in finished grade on opposite sides exceeding 24 inches, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding flammable liquids.
4. Platforms, walks, and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade and not over a story or basement below and not part of an accessible route.
5. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
6. Window awnings not projecting more than 54 inches that are supported by an exterior wall, and nothing else, of a building regulated by the International Residential Code.
7. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to buildings regulated by the International Residential Code that are less than 54 inches deep, do not exceed 5000 gallons, and are installed entirely above ground.
8. Repairs to structure, as defined herein, less than $1000.00 in valuation.
9. Installation or work which is done after regular business hours or during a holiday or when immediate action is imperative to safeguard life, health, or property, provided such person making the installation or performing the work applies for a permit covering the installation or work not later than the next business day.
10. Construction, alteration, or repair work for which a permit is not required by law or ordinance.
11. Interior plastering or paneling of existing surfaces provided the material meets all applicable requirements of flame spread required by this Code.
12. Exterior re-plastering that any does not require the application of exterior lath.
13. Interior non-structural demolitions.

Unless otherwise exempted by the City of Albuquerque Uniform Administrative Code, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits will be required for the above exempted items.

# How do I know what kind of permit I need?

There is more than one type of permit. Therefore, it is important to know what permit(s) you need. Below is a description of the permits required by the City of Albuquerque:

* Building Permit – A building permit is an official approval issued by the City of Albuquerque, that allows a homeowner or contractor to proceed with a new construction or property remodeling project. The following projects require a building permit:
  + Walls and fences over sic (6) feet high (under six (6) feet – a permit from the Zoning Department is required)
  + Re-Roofing – General permits are required for re-roof
  + PV Solar System
  + Additions
* Electrical Permit – An electrical permit ensures your project is completed in compliance with the code requirements set forth, and followed by the City of Albuquerque. The following projects require an electrical permit:
  + Installation of an appliance, device, equipment or wiring
  + Additions, alternations, or replacements in existing appliances, devices, wiring or equipment

In order for a homeowner to apply for a permit, the homeowner must take and pass an exam with a score of 75% or higher. Otherwise a licensed electrical contractor will be required to apply for the necessary permits.

To schedule a homeowner’s exam contact the Building Safety Division at 505-924-3320, option 2.

* Plumbing/Mechanical Permit – A plumbing/mechanical permit is needed to ensure all plumbing and mechanical permits are completed in accordance with the code requirements set forth by the City of Albuquerque. The following projects require a plumbing/mechanical permit:
  + Heating or cooling
  + Installation of exhaust hood
  + Installation or alteration of bathroom or kitchen piping
  + Installation of equipment or ductwork (work can only be completed by a licensed contractor)
  + Installation or alteration of house sewer or water service outside of structure
  + Installation of a water heater (work can only be completed by a licensed contractor)

In order for a homeowner to apply for a permit, the homeowner must take and pass an exam with a score of 75% or higher. Otherwise a licensed plumbing contractor will be required to apply for the necessary permits.

To schedule a homeowner’s exam contact the Building Safety Division at 505-924-3320, option 2.

A New Mexico licensed contractor is required for all mechanical permits.

Homeowners may **not** install work associated with gas. A licensed New Mexico contractor is required.

# How do I obtain a building permit?

Licensed contractors or homeowners, must request permits for the work that will be performed. It is the responsibility of the homeowner or contractor to ensure all required permits have been obtained, prior to beginning work.

NOTE:

* Homeowner’s performing the work are required to obtain a permit.
  + If your home is in a subdivision with a homeowners’ association (HOA), all plans should be approved by the association, before applying to the City for a building permit. The City does not enforce HOA regulations. Homeowners are responsible to know and follow any HOA requirements or restrictions.
* Contractors performing the work are required to obtain a permit.
* For all homes leased or rented to others, a licensed contractor is required to obtain a permit, for work performed. Additional permit information can be found using the following link:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/planning-faqs/building-safety-faqs>

## Step 1. Application

1. The homeowner or contractor can apply for a permit, in person at the permit office, located on the first floor of Plaza Del Sol, 600 2nd Street NW, Albuquerque, or email applications to [buildingsafetyapplications@cabq.gov](mailto:buildingsafetyapplications@cabq.gov), or online; using the following link:

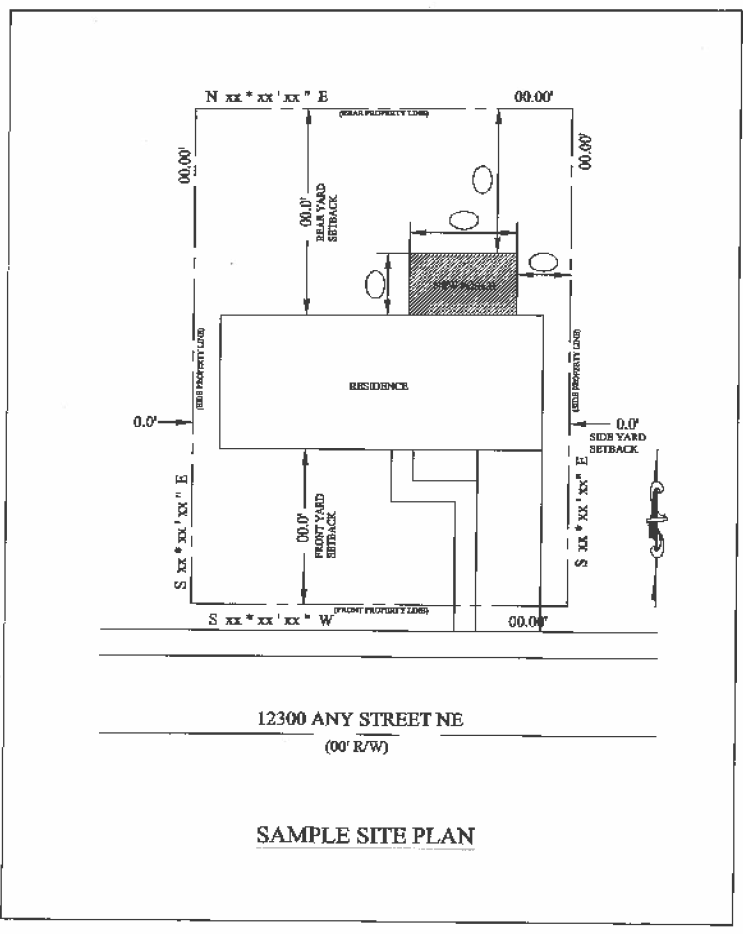
<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits>

I. Building Permits require the following documents:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Online Application Process:** | **Paper Application Process:** |
| For all permit applications consisting **of more than three (3) sheets**/drawings | For all permit applications consisting of **three (3) or less sheets/drawings** |
| * Site Plan/ Plot Plan, showing:   + Location of property lines (on all sides),   + Existing buildings on the lot (including their dimensions and distances to property lines),   + All proposed additions/structures, with dimensions and distance to property lines   + Identification of required setbacks | Two (2) sets of the following:   * Site Plan/ Plot Plan, showing:   + Location of property lines (on all sides),   + Existing buildings on the lot (including their dimensions and distances to property lines),   + All proposed additions/structures, with dimensions and distance to property lines   + Identification of required setbacks |
|  |  |
| * Proposed Work Documents (a set of construction documents or drawings for your project)   Examples:   * + - Elevation Drawings,     - Floor Plan,     - Foundation Drawings,     - Framing Plans,     - Plans showing all Electrical, Plumbing & Mechanical installation | * Proposed Work Documents (a set of construction documents or drawings for your project)   Examples:   * + Elevation Drawings,   + Floor Plan,   + Foundation Drawings,   + Framing Plans,   + Plans showing all Electrical, Plumbing & Mechanical installation |
|  |  |
| * Supporting Documents   Examples:   * Truss Details, * Stucco Specifications, * ICC Reports, * Beam Calculations, * Unusual Building Material Specifications, * Engineering Specifications for Metal/Steel construction (i.e. shipping containers) | * Supporting Documents   Examples:   * Truss Details, * Stucco Specifications, * ICC Reports, * Beam Calculations, * Unusual Building Material Specifications, * Engineering Specifications for Metal/Steel construction (i.e. shipping containers) |
|  |  |
| **All documents must be clear and legible** | |
| Contact the permit counter for direct upload of small projects of three (3) sheets or less  Examples:  Carports Sheds  Patios Minor Alterations | |

Contact the Zoning Department with questions regarding zoning issues, at (505) 924-3857.

The following illustration is an example of a Plot/Site Plan:



1. Once your application has been uploaded electronically or your paper drawings have been received, a Plan Reviewer will review to ensure code compliance requirements have been met.

* Turnaround time for submitted residential permit applications to be reviewed, is ten (10) business days.

Building Permit application comments, for applications submitted using the online process, are available online at:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits>

Once on the website, click on “View plan review comments” to view all available comments related to your Building Permit application or call (505) 924-3320, option 2 to speak with a Planning Assistant. **Have your permit number available when calling.**

1. The requested permit will be issued when approved by one or more of the following required divisions:

* Hydrology
* Zoning
* Building
* Electrical
* Plumbing/Mechanical

D. Permits will only be issued to the homeowner or the licensed general contractor (GB-2 or GB- 98).

* If the building permit is not issued within six (6) months from the date of submission, the application will expire.

## Step 2. Fee Information

Building permit and plan review fees are calculated on the valuation of your project.

* The valuation is based on the approximate cost to have a contractor do the job. Valuation includes labor and materials.

The City of Albuquerque Fee Schedule utilizes the ICC Building Valuation Data to determine the minimum value per square foot, for newly constructed buildings. If the valuation provided on the application is less than the valuation in the fee schedule adopted by the City, your permit fees will be based upon the City Fee Schedule. All valuation adjustments are computed as part of the plan review process.

Please Note:

* Plan review fees are due at the time you submit your application and plans.
* Permit fees are due once you are notified the plan review has been completed and plans have been approved.
* Any project under construction or completely built without a permit may be charged a double permit fee.

### How to pay fees:

The City of Albuquerque provides the convenience of allowing the community to make payments online or in person at 600 2nd St NW at our Treasury Department, on the first floor; for transactions, such as Building Permits, Business Registrations, Code Enforcement Permits and Planning Applications.

To make payments:

* Go to [www.cabq.gov/311/pay-a-bill](http://www.cabq.gov/311/pay-a-bill)
* Select the link: Building Permits, Business Registrations, Code Enforcement Permits, & Planning Applications
* Search for your permit by entering your permit number in the reference field (exactly as it is on your application. (For example: BP-2021-12345. Entries are case sensitive.)
* Verify the fees shown for your permit
* Enter your billing information
* Accept the acknowledgment request
* You will receive an email with a receipt of payment.

*Please Note*:

If you choose to pay online, the City of Albuquerque’s credit card processing vendor charges a 2.75% service fee for each credit/debit transaction processed. You also have the option to pay by e-Check, to avoid the service fees.

It may take 24 to 48 hours for charges to be reflected on your account.

# Types of Construction

At times, it is hard to determine the type of project you have chosen to undertake. The following information provides descriptions of the most common project types:

## New Home Construction

New home construction is a home that did not previously exist and will be occupied for the first time by the homeowner responsible for having the home constructed. This type of construction is typically designed and constructed from the ground up. New construction would also include new additions to an existing home.

See “New Residential Construction” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Carport to Garage Conversion, Garage conversion to Living Space and Patio Enclosure

This section applies to a building permit for a carport to garage conversion or a garage converted to a living space (heated space) which is attached to a primary residence. If this project is *not* attached to a primary residence, please refer to the section on detached accessory buildings.

To obtain a permit for a carport to garage conversion, please submit the following:

* Completed Building Permit Application.
* Compliance with the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)
* The required documents for Building permits, listed on page 5

See “Garage Conversion” and “Patio Enclosure” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Remodeling

Remodeling refers to one or more of the following:

* Altering a structure
* Changing the interior layout of a structure
* Changing interior and/or exterior finish materials of a structure

A building permit is needed for remodeling work, not listed as exempt in the previous section.

* Remodeling Projects need to comply with the same requirements listed for building permit application.
* Some small projects may only require a “Minor Alteration and Repair” permit.

Speak with a Building Safety plan reviewer to determine if you need a building permit or minor alteration and repair permit. The Building Safety Plan Review can be reached at 505-924-3320, option 2.

## Porches and Carports

Prior to submitting for a permit, please consult with the Zoning Department for zoning restrictions and minimum building setback requirements for adding a porch or carport to a residence.

To obtain a permit for a carport and/or porch, please submit the following:

* Completed Building Permit Application.
* The required documents for Building permits, listed on page 5

See “Covered Patio” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Room Addition

A room addition is defined as any space added on to an existing dwelling, including the enclosure of an existing covered area, such as a patio.

Any room (other than a bathroom or kitchen) which includes a closet, shall be considered a sleeping room and will need to meet all sleeping room requirements.

All habitable living areas must be provided with a heating source capable of maintaining a minimum room temperature of 68˚F. Information must be submitted showing how the required heating will be provided, at the time of plan review. Portable space heaters ***shall not be used*** to achieve compliance with this requirement.

Prior to submitting for a permit, please speak with the Zoning Department to determine:

* zoning building setbacks
* lot coverage
* architectural design requirements for the residential subdivision.

The Zoning Department can be reached at 505-924-3450.

To obtain a permit for a room addition, please submit the following:

* Completed Building Permit Application.
* Compliance with the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)
* The required documents for Building permits, listed on page 5

## Walls

Where grade elevation changes from one side of a wall to the other, the wall height is measured from the low side of grade. In cases where garden walls are built on top of retaining walls, the wall height is the combined height of the retaining wall and the garden wall. Measurements must be taken from the top of the footing to the top of the wall.

* Retaining Walls Over Twenty-Four Inches (24“)
  + Retaining walls having a difference in finished grade on opposite side exceeding twenty-four (24) inches must be stamped/certified by a New Mexico Registered Structural Engineer or Architect.
* Garden Walls Over Six Feet (6)
* Fences Over Six Feet (6’)
  + New garden walls and/or fences in excess of six (6) feet in height or existing walls and/or fences raised in excess of six feet (6’) must be certified by a New Mexico Registered Structural Engineer or Architect.

To obtain a permit for a room addition, please submit the following:

* Completed Building Permit Application.
* The required documents for Building permits, listed on page 5

See “Retaining Walls, Garden Walls and Fences” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Storage Sheds, Gazebos, Detached Buildings and Structures

All structures over 120 square feet require a building permit.

* An accessory building cannot be used for dwelling purposes. Indicate the proposed use of your building on your drawings.

For detached buildings and structures such as storage shed, open-air gazebos, and other accessory buildings, compliance with a property’s zoning district is required, including minimum building setbacks and maximum lot coverage, as applicable. Please speak with the Zoning Department to determine your subdivision’s zoning requirements. Building setbacks may apply, based on the square footage and height proposed.

See “Storage Building” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Re-Roofing and Roof Conversion

Re-roofing and roof conversions will require a trade permit. Re-roof permits do not include structural changes to the roof and can be pulled by homeowners. A re-roofing permit may be obtained at the permit and inspections counter located at Plaza Del Sol, 600 2nd St NW, Basement Room 190 or online at <https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits>.

Roof conversions will require drawings and truss shop drawings to be reviewed prior to the issuance of permit. These permits may be obtained at the Permit Desk on the ground floor at Plaza Del Sol or online at <https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/>.

See “Roof Conversion” handout for more information:

<https://www.cabq.gov/planning/building-safety-permits/building-safety-forms-reports-permit-searches>

## Stucco

Building permits are required to re-stucco a house or accessory building:

* “One-coat” Stucco systems require a permit and inspection under all circumstances. The building inspector require proof the installation contractor is a licensed applicator.
* An ICC-ES report is required for the one-coat stucco system, when applying for a permit. More information on the ICC-ES report can be found at: <https://icc-es.org/>.
* Other stucco systems, such as a three-coat system, require a permit so that the inspectors can ensure that the lath and other components are properly installed.

## Landscaping

Landscaping does not generally require a permit. However, a plumbing permit is needed to install the water service supply to an irrigation system (but no plan review is needed). A plumbing permit allows inspectors to check the installation of the required backflow preventer. The potable water supply to lawn irrigation systems shall be protected against backflow.

Water professionals can recommend a number of options for connecting an irrigation system. Whichever option you choose, it is recommended that an anti-siphon/vacuum breaker assembly be installed with its own gate valve. This enables the irrigation system water to be shut off without disrupting water service to the home.

Turning off the water at the meter is not recommended. This may cause a leak at the supply line coupling to the meter. All leaks on the home side of the water meter are the owner’s responsibility to repair. Contact appropriate utility service for more information.

# When are inspections required?

During the construction process, and after permits are issued; inspections are required to ensure compliance with approved plans and ordinances. All work must be inspected during different stages of the construction process. Homeowner/contractor may schedule inspections by calling (505) 924-3320 option 1.

To request an inspection the following information is required:

* Permit number
* Type of inspection
* Address
* Contact Number

Inspection requests received before 4:30pm are generally scheduled for the next business day. It is important to remember to keep the following information on site:

* The Permit Card.
* The Approved set of plans

# What work/project requires an inspection?

Below is a general list of the most common types of inspections and possible inspection outcomes (other inspections may be required):

### Building Inspections

* Foundation/Footing/Slab with Perimeter Insulation
  + - * + Inspection should be requested after excavation for footings are complete and any required reinforced steel is in place.
        + All materials for foundation need to be on site, except where concrete is ready-mixed (in accordance with ASTM C94, the concrete does not need to be on site)
* Framing Inspection
  + - * + Inspection should be requested after:

After all trade rough in inspections have been completed

Window and exterior door installation

Firewall installation

Fire stop system installation, if required

Air Barrier Thermal Bypass Package installation and inspection

Roof installation

Shear, Sheathing, Portal and Wall Inspections have been completed

* Sheathing Inspection
  + - * + Portal and Shear wall inspection
* Lath Inspection
  + - * + Inspection should be requested after all exterior lathing is in place; but not before any plaster is applied
* Wallboard Inspection
  + - * + Inspection should be requested for all firewalls, wet areas and shear walls, before wallboard joints and fasteners are taped and finished
* Insulation Inspection
* Final Inspection
  + - * + Inspection should be requested after the building has been completed and is ready for occupancy, but before it is occupied.
        + Inspection can be requested by the permit holder
        + Make sure all of the following are complete before calling for a final inspection:

All trader permits must be final

Air leakage test must be complete

Must have a permanent address for the dwelling

Clearance from Hydrology has been received

Curb cut has been completed

Carbon and smoke detectors are interconnected and in working order

All exterior landing is in place on doors

The door between the dwelling and the garage must be self-closing

There is landscape drainage away from the dwelling

Energy Certificate has been received

### Plumbing Inspections

* Rough-In Inspection
* Top-Out Inspection
* Final Inspection
  + - * + Inspection can be requested after the above inspections have been completed

### Mechanical Inspections

* Rough-In Inspection
* Top-Out Inspection
* Final Inspection
  + - * + Inspection can be requested after the above inspections have been completed

### Electrical Inspections

* Temporary Pole Inspection
* Rough-In Inspection
* Slab Inspection
* Low-Voltage Rough & Inspections
* Pre-Final Inspection
* Final Inspection
  + - * + Inspection can be requested after the above inspections have been completed

## Inspection Outcomes

Once the inspector has determined all construction has been approved, one of the following will be posted:

* A green tag indicating work passes inspection,
* A yellow tag indicating code deficiencies which must be corrected before violations are concealed, or
* A red tag indicating that work in that particular category must be stopped and corrections made and approved before work can continue.
* If corrections are necessary, the contractor or homeowner is responsible for making the corrections and calling for a re-inspection.

**If you have any questions, please contact the Planning – Building Safety Division at 505-924-3320 or permitrequest.gov.**

How does a homeowner submit a building/trade permit?

Read the Homeowner’s Guide to help you know what permit(s) you need for your project.

Homeowner fills out an online permit application or submits via email

Homeowner fills out a paper application at the permit counter

If plans/drawings are required, homeowner brings them to the permit counter

If plans/drawings are required, homeowner uploads them during online application process

If corrections are needed, the online system will send notification to the homeowner

If corrections are needed, the permit counter will notify the homeowner

Submitted application is reviewed by Planning Assistant

Homeowner submits corrections in-person at permit counter

Homeowner submits corrections online

NOTE: Building Permits require Plan Review.

Trade permits do not require Plan Review.

PERMIT IS ISSUED

If no corrections are required or if corrections have been made, homeowner pays permit fees