



Homeowner's Permit Guide

Permit and Inspection Process



City of Richmond Bureau of Permits and Inspections

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PDPermitsAndInspections@rva.gov

Zoning Administration
(804) 646-6340

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(804) 646-6301

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When is a Building Permit Required for Residential Projects?

A Building permit is required for new construction, additions, alterations, repairs, removal, demolition, and occupancy per Section 108.1 from the 2021 Virginia Residential Building Code. Exceptions for application for permit can be found in the code, including ordinary repairs, replacement of windows, doors, installation of cabinetry.

Building Permit Process:

1. **Building Permit Application:** A building permit must be obtained prior to commencing any construction or alterations to a building. To submit plans for your proposed work, you will need to apply for a permit using the City of Richmond Online Permit Portal at:

https://energov.richmondgov.com/energov_pro/d/selfservice#/home

2. **Plan Review and Approval:** The application plan submission will be reviewed by plan examiners for compliance with applicable codes, ordinances, regulations, and standards. Trade applications will not be reviewed, and the permits will be issued once the building permit is issued. Once the plans are approved and the permit issued, you can start construction. The permit and stamped documents will be uploaded on the Online Permit Portal and a copy shall be posted on site.

3. **Inspections Request:** Work may begin once the permit has been issued. You can schedule inspections using the Online Permit Portal. Approved construction documents are required to be onsite for inspections.

4. **Post Permit Revisions:** Any changes to the project after the permit is issued need to be reviewed and approved by our office. Revised plans reflecting the changes are required before initiation and incorporation of the work.

Plan Requirements:

Construction documents are required for most projects. Depending on the project scope, one or more of these file types will be required:

- Site Plan showing the location of the new structure and the distance to property lines
- Construction Documents (Floor Plans, Framing Plans, Foundation Plan, Elevation, wall section, Roof Plan, Construction Details)
- Soil Report – Required for New Homes
- Braced Wall Spreadsheet
- Manufacture's Trusses Calculations if applies.
- Structural Reports (beams calculations)
- Sealed Letter or Report as needed

A detailed description of each file can be at:

<https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review/permits-and-inspections>



Certificate of Occupancy:

A Certificate of Occupancy indicating completion of work must be obtained prior to occupancy of a new building or change of occupancy of a structure. A new Certificate of Occupancy is not required for an addition, alterations and decks to an existing dwelling that already has a Certificate of Occupancy.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *Who can apply for a building permit?*
Application shall be made by the owner or lessee of the relevant property or the agent of either or by the Registered Design Professional, or contractor associated with the work or any of their agents.
2. *What should I know before hiring a contractor?* Hire only licensed contractors by checking at 804-367-8511 or www.dpor.virginia.gov or. Have a written detailed contract, including the specific work to be done.
3. *What if I need to change the contractor of my project?* If the permit is issued and inspections were performed, the existing permit needs to be canceled. A new application with new construction documents needs to be submitted by the owner or by the new contractor.
4. *How long it takes to obtain my permit?*
The goal is to have the initial review completed within 10 business days of receiving the application in plan review.
5. *How long is a building permit valid?*
Building permits are valid for 180 days from the date of issuance. Every time there is a building inspection on the property, the permit is extended for another 180 days from the date of inspection.
6. *Do I need to hire a Registered Design Professional (RDP) to prepare the construction documents for my project?*
Residential plans do not require to be prepared by an RDP. Plans can be prepared by the applicant, owner, or contractor.

- Is trade work included in the building permit application and approval? Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Gas piping work cannot be included on a residential building permit. Each trade requires a separate application. Construction documents are not required for residential trade permit applications.



Minimum Inspections:

The following minimum inspections shall be conducted by the building official when applicable to the construction or permit:

- Inspection of footing excavations and reinforcement material for concrete footings prior to the placement of concrete.
- Inspection of foundation systems during phases of construction necessary to assure compliance with this code.
- Inspection of preparatory work prior to the placement of concrete.
- Inspection of structural members and fasteners prior to concealment.
- Inspection of electrical, mechanical, and plumbing materials, equipment, and systems prior to concealment.
- Inspection of energy conservation material (insulation) prior to concealment.
- Final inspection.

You can schedule inspections using the Online

Permit Portal at:

https://energov.richmondgov.com/energov_pro/d/selfservice#/home

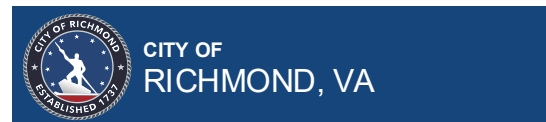
Alterations:

Construction documents are required for alterations. Floor plans of each level impacted by the proposed work with all rooms labeled must be submitted. Plans must include:

- Site Plan showing how altered walls within five feet of the property line will be rated.
- Identification of all new rated wall & horizontal assemblies and rated doors
- Location and size of new doors, windows and openings, and size of new headers
- Plans showing the new and existing walls, and wall selected for demolition.
- Identification of safety glazing where required.
- Dimensions and locate fixtures in new and renovated kitchen and bathrooms.
- Ceiling heights in altered rooms.
- R-Value of new insulation
- Location of new framing members
- Location of new wood fireplaces & gas logs

Prior to digging go to va811.com or call 811.

va811.com is a free service that will locate member utilities your prior excavation. Notification must be made a minimum of 48 Hours in advance.



Accessory Dwelling Units:

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), attached or detached, is defined as a Dwelling Unit that is accessory to the primary dwelling. An ADU provides for separate living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation facilities, but may share living space, means of egress, utilities, or other components.



Image source: APA and AARP

ADU Application Requirements:

- The main structure must be a detached Single-Family Dwelling. Construction documents must show the location of the proposed ADU in relation with the main dwelling.
- All ADU applications must include a Site Plan indicating distances from structures to property lines and other structures.
- Applications must include a floor plan of the main dwelling and the accessory dwelling unit, indicating the spaces shared with both units.
- ADU floor plan must show permanent fixtures for cooking and sanitation facilities.
- The ADU cannot exceed one-third of the floor area of the main dwelling or 500 SF, whichever is greater. ADUs must meet the underlying zoning district regulations.
- ADUs cannot be located over 250 feet from a hydrant. Contact Fire Department for exceptions.

Contact Information:

The City of Richmond Planning and Development Review website:
<https://www.rva.gov/planning-development-review>

The City of Richmond Permits, and Inspections Help Desk: 804-646-4169
PDRPermitsAndInspections@rva.gov

The City of Richmond Zoning Administration Office: 804-646-4169
PDRZoning_Administration@rva.gov

The International Code Council website is:
<https://www.iccsafe.org/>

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development website is:
<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/codes>

Better Business Bureau website:
<https://www.bbb.org>

Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation website:
<https://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup>

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

