



Understanding Building Permits in the City of Hamilton

Understanding Building Permits

In the City of Hamilton, it is the Planning and Economic Development Department's Building Services Division that regulates and inspects all construction within the City. Administration of the Zoning By-law and enforcement of the Ontario Building Code Act (which ensures public safety) are two key elements that impact the Building Permit process. The Building Services Division offers several other services that relate to this process including:

- Issuance of Building and Demolition Permits
- Issuance of Zoning Verifications/Property Reports
- Enforcement of licensed trade contractors
- Responding to zoning inquiries or complaints (related to new construction)
- Responding to unsafe building complaints

It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that a Building Permit is obtained, when required, prior to commencing construction or demolition.

Who do I contact when I have questions?

One of the goals of the Building Services Division is to provide the most efficient and courteous service possible to our customers. In order to achieve this goal the Building Services Division is staffed by friendly and knowledgeable individuals; all of whom possess an educational background in Civil Engineering or Architectural/Civil Engineering Technology as well as several years experience working with Building Services' policies and procedures. Staff are available to answer questions Monday - Friday between 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(Please see contact information on back)

Why do I need a Building Permit?

A Building Permit gives you the legal authorization to start construction or demolition of a building project in accordance with approved drawings and specifications. You cannot lawfully begin construction or demolition without first applying for and obtaining a Building Permit.

Building Permits are issued by the Building Services Division and are reviewed for compliance with the Ontario Building Code, Zoning By-Laws and other applicable provincial and municipal regulations. Building Permits are necessary to ensure that zoning requirements, fire and structural safety standards and other building standards are met.

What happens if I do not get a Building Permit?

If construction has started prior to the issuance of a Building Permit,

- Costly repairs may be required to gain compliance
- Removal of work done not in compliance with the Ontario Building Code and/or other applicable law may be required
- The Building Permit fee may be increased
- Legal action may be initiated by the Building Services Division to gain compliance

If you are not sure if a Building Permit is required for your project please contact the Building Services Division at 905.546.2720 and one of our staff will be happy to assist you.

What is the Building Permit process?

Application

Applying for a Building Permit is your first step before you begin any construction project. Building Permits may be applied for by the property owner, or by an agent on behalf of the owner such as the contractor or designer. Applications for Building Permits, along with fee schedules, are available at the Building Services Division's Offices and may also be downloaded at: www.hamilton.ca/building.

Please note: you can fill out the application at home, but most applications must be submitted in person as they require additional documentation.

Fees

Permit fees are required to be paid at the time of application. Building Permit fees are determined from By-law 08-161(as amended). For new buildings, the fee is based on a dollar amount per square metre of floor area.

Approvals

Before a Building Permit application can be accepted, it must be complete and approvals for all applicable laws must be in place. In most cases, plans will be required to reflect the construction details of the proposed work and all zoning information should be provided such as an up-to-date survey.

Drawings

When applying for a Building Permit you will need to submit a completed application form and two copies of the following drawings:

- Floor plans for each floor
- Elevations
- Cross sections
- Mechanical/structural/electrical plans or data
- Truss details

- Plot plan/survey or site plan and
- Grading plan (for new sub-divisions)

Can I do my own drawings?

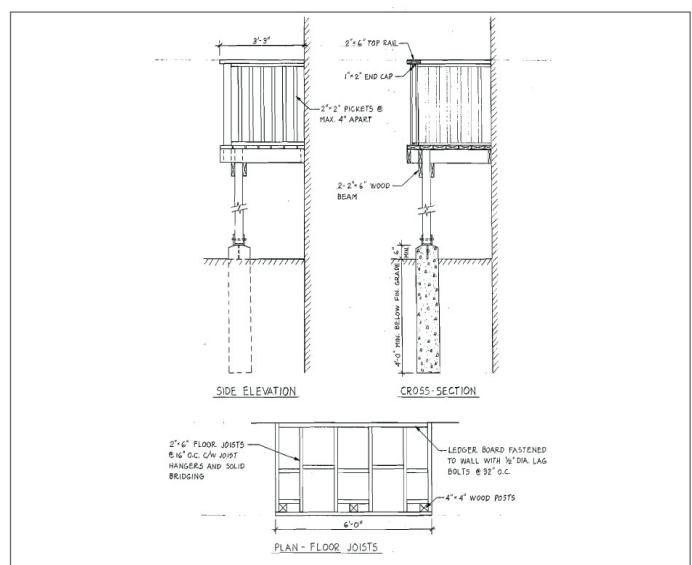
As the owner, you may design your own project and produce your own drawings. However, if you are not familiar with various government regulations, by-laws and Ontario Building Code requirements, you may wish to hire a qualified designer instead. Delays in the issuance of your permit can arise if your drawing and specification submissions are not complete or do not conform to the Ontario Building Code and/or Zoning By-Law.

Most designs for Building Permits, not completed by the owner, will require a designer registered and/or qualified under Division C, Part 3, Section 3.2 of the Ontario Building Code (an Architect or Engineer is exempt from this requirement). A designer is anyone who is responsible for the design, which may also include preparing the drawings for submission. You may wish to check with the Building Services Division to find out whether your project requires a qualified designer.

How do I know if a designer is qualified?

Qualified designers will have a Building Code Identification Number (BCIN). Qualifications may be verified on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website at www.mah.gov.on.ca. Please contact the Ministry at 416.585.6666 if you have any further questions regarding designers or qualifications.

Example of Design Requirements



Hamilton

BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

What happens to my Building Permit application?

Every Building Permit application, regardless of its complexity, is processed and checked for zoning and building construction approval. This ensures that all approved applications meet the intent of the Zoning By-Laws for the particular district that the property is located in and that the construction meets all requirements set out in the Ontario Building Code. Staff will contact you or your agent when your application is approved or if your application is incomplete or requires additional information. If there are problems with your application, staff will provide you with a list of deficiencies that you will have to address in order to get your Building Permit approved.

What happens when I receive my Building Permit?

Upon obtaining a Building Permit the property owner or contractor is required to arrange for inspections of construction. The Building Inspections Section carries out inspections in conjunction with a Building Permit and also responds to customer requests to determine if a permit is required. Knowledgeable staff assist both the homeowner and contractor on completing their projects in accordance with Ontario Building Code regulations and applicable municipal zoning requirements.

Our Building Inspectors work closely with other regulatory bodies in the City, such as, the Fire Prevention Bureau, Health Department and Development Engineering Division, to ensure that all applicable local regulations are adhered to. This involves conducting fire alarm tests, informing Fire and Health of any possible violations discovered during our routine inspections, and ensuring conformance with any agreements between the City and any other organization dealing with development of lands, such as Site Plan Agreements and Subdivision Agreements.

How do I schedule inspections?

Requests for inspections can be made by calling the inspection request line at 905.546.3950. The scheduling of appointments for inspections are made with the Building Inspector. Building Inspectors will inspect at key stages of construction (required inspection stages). It is the permit holder's (applicant's/property owner's/contractor's) responsibility to call the Building Inspector to arrange for inspections at the required inspection stages. The permit holder must also ensure that they are knowledgeable about the Ontario Building Code and understand that they must comply with all of its requirements.

What are some examples of projects that require a Building Permit?

Building Permits are required for various types of construction including:

- New buildings
- New residential dwellings
- Demolition of any structure occupying an area greater than 108 ft² (10m²)
- Commercial, industrial and institutional construction
- Additions
- Tenant improvements
- Interior alterations
- Accessory sheds or garages
- Decks and porches
- Mechanical or structural alterations
- Installation of fire safety systems
- Installation of new water service and sewers for residential dwellings
- Tents greater than 60m² or all tents within 3.0m of a building
- Wood stoves, fireplaces
- Change of Use/Occupancy
- Installing a ramp or elevating device

Whether you intend to erect a new dwelling or simply construct a new rear deck, a Building Permit is required in order to ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code, Zoning By-laws and all other relevant legislation. Generally, construction or alterations that results in a material change to a building or an accessory structure will require a permit and inspection(s). Prior to commencing any construction project contact the Building Services Division in order to determine exactly what your requirements are and how to obtain a Building Permit.

Please note: Accessory buildings and exterior portions of heating and air-conditioning systems, etc., are subject to setback requirements of the Zoning By-law. Installation before approval and issuance of a permit (where required) may result in costly re-location or removal.



Understanding Building Permits *in the City of Hamilton*

The Building Services Division has several brochures that will help you with projects such as:

- Residential additions
- Accessory buildings (i.e. garages, gazebos etc.)
- Porches and decks
- Tents (more than 60 square metres) and air-supported structures

*For more information about the residential inspection process we recommend you review the **Residential Buildings Inspections brochure**, which will provide more details including a list of the required inspection stages.*

Important Contacts:

Call Before you Dig (24 hour service):

1.800.400.2255

Committee of Adjustment

(Minor Variances from Zoning By-Law):

905.546.4221

Conservation Authority:

Hamilton Region: 905.525.2181

Halton Region: 905.336.1158

Grand River: 519.621.2761

Niagara Peninsula: 905.788.3135

CP Rail:

1.800.766.7912

Electrical Safety Authority

(Electrical permits/inspections):

1.877.372.7233

Encroachments/Alley information:

905.546.2424 Ext. 4298

Historical Designations/Information:

905.546.2424 Ext. 1202 or Ext. 1220

Looking for additional Brochures and Applications?

All department brochures can be found at www.hamilton.ca/pedpublications

All department applications can be found at www.hamilton.ca/pedapplications

Information collected in the building permit application process, including personal information, is collected under the authority of the *Building Code Act*, 1992, S.O. 1992, Chap. 23 and is subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56.

For more information, please call 905-546-2720 or email building@hamilton.ca

For more information contact:

Building Services Division

Planning and Economic Development Department

City Hall

71 Main Street West, 3rd Floor

Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 4Y5

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 905.546.2720

Email: building@hamilton.ca

Website: www.hamilton.ca/building



BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT