

# GUIDE TO BUILDING PERMITS FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

## STEVENS COUNTY LAND SERVICES PERMIT CENTER

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Customer Service Bulletin # **B-1**

One part of your project is obtaining the necessary permits. Your project will be reviewed in coordination with other County agencies which are responsible for regulating different aspects of the development process. It's important to know that your project may require review and approvals or permits from the Planning Division and the NE Tri-County Health District [Environmental Health Department], before the Building Division issues your permit. The following information lets you know what steps you need to take to ensure a timely issuance of your building permit.

Although the purpose of the Building Division is to regulate construction to ensure safe and structurally sound buildings, they can also be a valuable technical resource. The various codes set **minimum** standards for structural, energy, plumbing, mechanical, fire and life safety design. The plan review and inspection process can identify discrepancies before they become problems during the life of your structure. Inspectors are knowledgeable of construction techniques; if you are thinking of building something unusual, discuss your idea with your inspector to determine code compliance.

**1. COMPLETED SITE PLAN/SITE PLAN ANALYSIS.** A site analysis application must be submitted to the Planning Division for review. The site analysis will identify if your proposal is consistent with the County's development regulations. Be sure to show the setback distance between your proposed building and the property lines.

**FAQ:** Can I submit the site plan analysis at the same time I submit application and plans for the building permit?

**Answer:** YES. This allows the Building Department to begin processing your application and review of the construction plans. However, your project cannot be approved until the site analysis is complete.

**2. COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM.** Review and complete the building permit application form. Please have all required information on the form at the time of application. If incomplete, your application may be returned and processing will not begin.

**3. PROOF/POTABLE WATER CERTIFICATION.** You will need to demonstrate proof of adequate and potable water prior to issuance of building permits. This can be demonstrated through a certification/testing process for a private water source or by a letter from the owner/operator of an approved public water system that authorizes your hook-up.

**FAQ:** Can I submit the building permit application and plans before I have my water tests?

**Answer:** YES. This allows the Building Division to begin processing your application and review of the construction plans. However, your building permit cannot be issued until the water certification information is complete.

**4. ADEQUATE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM [ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPT. (509) 684-2262]**

You will need to obtain a permit from the NE Tri-County Health District, Environmental Health Dept., for a sewage disposal system to serve your new home. Contact the Environmental Health Dept. for the sewage permit application or to find out information about your existing sewage system. Please provide a copy of your septic permit, if available; this will help expedite your review.

**FAQ:** Can I submit the building permit application and plans before I have my septic permit?

**Answer:** YES. This allows the Building Department to begin processing your application and review of the construction plans. In most cases, the septic system approval requirements for building permits will be satisfied after test holes and soils information have been reviewed and approved by NETCHD for septic system suitability.

If your home will be served by a public sewer system, provide a letter from the operator of the system that authorizes your hook-up.

5. **LAND USE APPROVALS [PLANNING DIVISION (509) 684-2401 Ext #4]** The Planning Division reviews **ALL** proposed construction projects to determine conformance with the County's land use regulations. Some common issues are listed below and will be addressed during the site analysis application review. ***If you think your project may be impacted by any of these issues, contact the Planning Division for additional information.***

- Projects within 200 feet of the shoreline of any lake, river, stream or wetland may be subject to SHORELINE and CRITICAL AREA ORDINANCE restrictions. Construction in these areas of a single family residence requires a shoreline permit exemption, or possible Critical Area Ordinance permit, to be processed by the Planning Division prior to building permit issuance.
- Projects on property less than 20 acres in size will be reviewed for compliance with the county's subdivision laws. If you know the parcel was created through a subdivision action, reference the platted lot's legal description in your application materials.
- Projects that involve more than one dwelling unit on a property or some type of commercial or business activity, may require a separate land use review and permit under Stevens County Code Title 3, Development Regulations.

6. **DRIVEWAY/ACCESS PERMIT [PUBLIC WORKS DEPT. (509) 684-4548].** Projects that are served by driveways that gain access directly from a county road must have a road access permit. If you need to develop a new driveway or improve an existing access, contact the Public Works Department to secure your permit or ask questions about the application process.

Contact the Washington State Dept. of Transportation in Spokane at (509) 324-6540 for a road approach permit to a state highway.

7. **PROPERTY SITE ADDRESS [INFORMATION SERVICES (509) 684-7505]** A site address is required for building and sewage permit applications. If your property has not yet been issued an address by Information Services, please request an "Application for a Site Address". Be sure to clearly post your address so your job site can be easily found by the inspector.

8. **BUILDING DIVISION APPROVAL [BUILDING DIVISION (509) 684-8325 Ext. #5].** You will need to submit two complete sets of plans for review. Refer to the Residential Plan Checklist for necessary information to show on the plans and the compilation of building codes for commonly used residential code requirements. One approved set of plans will be returned to you; it must be made available at the job site for inspections. Staff is available to provide technical assistance regarding building, plumbing, mechanical, energy or fire code questions. If you need additional information about any of these issues, contact the Building Division. We are here to help you through the process.

- ◆ Plans will be reviewed for conformance to structural, life safety, energy, plumbing, mechanical and fire code minimum standards.
- ◆ The design for all trusses, for any "pole building", or for any structure over 4,000 square feet in floor area, shall be stamped by a licensed Washington State engineer or architect.
- ◆ Log home design plans may require a stamp from a licensed engineer or architect.
- ◆ Stevens County does not review electrical installations. Please contact the Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries for information and permits. The regional office for L&I is in Spokane - located at N. 901 Monroe Street Suite #100. Telephone: 1-800-509-8847. Online at: [www.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.Lni.wa.gov)

9. **WHAT INSPECTIONS ARE REQUIRED?** At a minimum, the following inspections are required. You should contact the Building Division to request the inspection at least 48 hours in advance. Inspection requests for the same day may not be performed. During the busy spring, summer and fall building season, inspectors normally have their list of inspections scheduled and are on their way before 9:00 A.M.

- A. Pre-Construction Site Inspection: *These are only required in special circumstances, such as proximity to a steep slope, lot lines, etc.* Stake the footprint of the structure and any lot lines within 20 feet of the building (including road right-of-way line).
- B. Footings or Post Holes: Call before pouring. Mark all nearby property lines. The rebar needs to be visible for inspection. At this time, the inspector will also verify setbacks and building location.
- C. Foundation Walls/Slab: Call before pouring. The rebar needs to be visible for inspection.
- D. Ground Work Plumbing: If slab will be over plumbing, call before covering so plumbing can be inspected. A water fill with 10 foot head test is required for plastic drain-waste-vent piping.
- E. Radon Rock: Call when rock is in and moisture retarder membrane is in place (slabs only).
- F. Rough-In Plumbing: For copper or metal piping: air or water test at 50 lbs. is required on water supply lines; drain-waste lines require a water fill with 10 foot head test before cover. Plastic supply piping requires a water test at working pressure.
- G. Framing: Framing completed, rough-in plumbing done. Ready for insulation.
- H. Insulation: Insulation in walls, floors ceiling complete, including all vapor barriers. Ventilation fans and air intake systems will be checked. Window and door "U"-Values will be verified.
- I. Final: Everything completed that relates to structural, fire and life safety code requirements (i.e., stairs, handrails, smoke detectors). Bathroom and kitchen cabinets and fixtures all installed. Does not include items such as carpeting, all light fixtures, baseboard molding, etc.)

10. **HOW MUCH ARE APPLICATION FEES?** Fees are established by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners. Building permit fees for new construction are based on the determination of valuation of the building or structure; determination of value shall be made by the Building Official and is normally computed utilizing the "Building Valuation Data" as published in the most current edition of "Building Safety Journal". The value to be used in computing the fee shall be the total value of all construction work, including finish work, painting, roofing, electrical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning, etc. Construction value is computed by multiplying the appropriate occupancy valuation times the gross horizontal areas for each building floor and/or occupancy. The building permit fee includes the cost of the plumbing permit, but not the mechanical permit (if required-for gas appliances). There will be a plan review fee for residential and commercial structures. Fees must be paid at time of application submittal. Please contact the Building Division directly if you have questions about your specific project.

11. **WILL YOUR BUILDING PERMIT EVER EXPIRE?** All building permits will expire if the permit is not used within 180 days from the date of issuance. Use means that substantial progress has been made during the 180 days. Permits that have not been used may be extended (one time only) at the discretion of the Building Official. A written request for an extension must be submitted by the applicant. The permit may also expire if construction activity stops for a period longer than 180 days (6 months). Keep the Building Division informed of your progress, call for a required inspection at least once every 6 months, request an extension if necessary, and your permit will remain current. If the permit does expire, and you desire to reactivate an expired permit, you could be charged a percentage of the current fee for that permit, or at a minimum, additional inspection fees.

12. **EXEMPTIONS.** A building permit is not required for any construction, repairs or movement of any unheated detached garage, agricultural, or storage building that will not be occupied or used for commercial purposes **and** the structure is separated by a minimum of 20 feet from any occupancy rated structure or external property line. "Occupied" includes living quarters, office space, guestroom, studio, playroom, etc. A site analysis application and site plan is still required for the exempt structure. No permit or fee is required for any repairs or construction less than \$2,000 in valuation (including materials and labor, or replacement costs). Exemptions do not include mechanical systems.

**IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE?** There are a wide variety of handouts and manuals available at the Permit Center to help you understand the building permit process. Staff has prepared a compilation of all the building codes to assist you throughout the design and construction process. It also identifies design criteria specific to Stevens County, such as frost depth and snow load. This handout is free and available upon request at the Building Division.