

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **When do I need a building permit and when don't I need a building permit?**

The Zoning Ordinance, at Section 305-31, outlines when a building permit is required. In short, you need a permit if you are constructing an addition or deck, moving a wall, installing new windows, performing any electrical or plumbing work, installing new heating or cooling devices, adding a wood or gas fireplace / stove, or installing a backyard shed or pool.

No permit is necessary for putting on a second layer of roof shingles, replacing your flooring, installing replacement windows or doors of the same size, swapping out old kitchen cabinets for new ones. It is always a good idea to contact the Planning Office to check to see if your work requires a permit. Please review the Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Section 305-31, for more details.

### **How do I apply for a building permit and what information is needed?**

The permit form is located on the website or a paper copy is available in the Planning Office. Please complete the form and attach all necessary information [floor plans, site plans, etc.]. Return the completed form to the Planning Office.

### **How long does the processing of permits take?**

The processing of a building permit takes 8-10 working days for new construction and 3-8 working days for renovations to property. The processing period does not begin until ALL information and the completed application is turned into the office.

### **When do I need a letter of authorization and what should it entail?**

Any time the person applying for a permit or submitting an application is not the owner of the property a letter of authorization needs to be submitted along with the permit. The letter must be provided by the owner.

### **What is Energy Code Compliance? When do I need to apply?**

You must apply for Energy Code Compliance if you are constructing a new residential structure or an addition. Any living area addition with heat needs Energy Code compliance.

The Energy Code application is submitted to The State of New Hampshire, PUC (Public Utilities Commission). Once this application is filled out and approved by PUC, it is then submitted with the building permit application. A building permit is not considered complete if it is turned in without the Energy Code Compliance approval when it is deemed necessary.

### **When do I need to pull a demolition permit?**

Any time you are removing any structure (including, but not limited to: Sheds, porches, homes, or accessory structures). For any interior renovation work that results in the removal of walls, bathrooms, sheet rock, or other miscellaneous items, that work will need to be permitted thru a building permit.. If you are concerned about whether you need to obtain a demolition permit, please contact the office for direction.

### **I believe my neighbor/other member of the City is completing work without a permit, how do I file a formal complaint?**

You must fill out a Service Request form, which can be found on the City Manager's web page. This form must be submitted to the City Manager's Office, who will then make sure that the proper departments are made aware of the complaint so that a review and site visit can be completed.

### **Do I as an electrician/plumber, need to pull an electrical/plumbing permit?**

Yes, if a building permit has not already been pulled.

No, if a building permit has already been applied for and your information and license number was submitted along with that building permit application.

### **What qualifies as a shed and where can I put this shed on my lot?**

A shed, as defined by the Zoning Ordinance, is a structure that is less than 150 square feet, has a height no greater than 10 feet tall. If the structure you are proposing is larger than this it is considered an accessory structure. The shed must not pass the parallel line of the front of the house. A shed may be located 10' from the property line if it meets the above requirements. A building permit is required for all sheds/accessory structures.

### **I want to build on my land, but I don't know if I meet setbacks?**

There are eleven zoning districts within the City and each has its own setback requirements. Building a structure with the setback area is not permitted unless you obtain approval from the Zoning Board. If you have questions about your setbacks you may contact the Planning and Zoning Office, at (603) 934-2341 or visit the Zoning Ordinance, Section 305-14.

### **If I don't meet the setbacks, is there a process to utilize my land?**

Yes, a Variance application can be submitted to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and you must be able to demonstrate that you satisfy the 5 variance criteria.

### **How do I apply for a variance?**

The Variance application is located at the Zoning Board page of the website. Paper copies are also available in the Planning Office. Complete the application and submit it to the Planning Office. There is a fee for filing the application and notifying the abutters for the public hearing. The Planning office staff can provide some assistance in completing the application form.

### **How do I find answers to building code questions?**

In order to have a question answered regarding the existing building code please contact the Life Safety/Building Inspector. The office is located at the Franklin Fire Department and can be contacted at (603) 934-5680.

### **Can I subdivide my land?**

In order to be able to subdivide your land, you must be able to meet the frontage and lot area requirements for the designated zone. Please consult the Zoning ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations to know more about the subdivision process.

### **What do I do when my septic fails?**

You must immediately contact the State of New Hampshire, Department of Environmental Services to get approval to put in a new septic system. You can reach DES by calling (603) 271-3503.

### **I want to construct a new building, or an addition, on a business or commercial parcel; what is my first step?**

Construction work on business or commercial property triggers the need for Site Plan approval. Please review the Site Plan Regulations to learn more about this application and approval process.

### **I have an application before a board (whether Planning or Zoning) and would like to contact the members, can I do this?**

Members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Heritage Commission and Conservation Commission are boards that need to carry the “jury affect”. This means they need to come into a meeting not having made a decision either for or against an application. An applicant cannot contact any members of the Boards as this may provide a member with information not available to other members. Having one-to-one conversations with a Board member can jeopardize the legality of an application process.

### **How do I become a member of the Planning/Zoning Board in Franklin?**

If you are a resident of the City and would like to become a member of a land use board you must fill out a Prospective Appointee Profile Form available on the website.

### **I want to put a carport on my property, do I need a permit?**

Yes, you must apply for and be granted a building permit. A carport must be properly secured to the ground and must meet the setback requirements for the zone.

**How often are there meetings of the board?**

The Planning and Zoning Boards meet monthly, unless no new applications were submitted and there was no old business continued before the board. The deadline date for these meetings is 21 days prior to the scheduled meeting date. The usual schedule for both Boards is on the website.

**Where can I get a copy of the Zoning Map?**

The Tax map is available from the website.

**If I want to start a business in the City what must I do?**

There are different requirements for different kinds of business. To set up an area for your business you may need a building permit and you must contact the Planning and Zoning Office to inquire about whether the business is an allowed use within the zone the lot is located. The best thing to do is to contact the office and set up a meeting with the Planning and Zoning Director to discuss your proposed business.