

**CITY OF TRACY
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
BUILDING SAFETY DIVISION**



**A Homeowner's Guide
to
Building Permits
Submitting Building Plans
And
Building Inspections**

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INTRODUCTION

This brochure is intended to provide basic information for homeowners wishing to design and/or build a new home or add an addition to and/or remodel an existing home. It is not a complete list of the City's codes and regulations but is intended to provide answers to the questions most frequently asked of the Building Safety Division by interested homeowners.

Residential buildings are typically constructed using what is called "conventional construction" by the California Residential Code. This method utilizes materials and techniques that have been proven through long periods of usage to be adequate for residential buildings. The information provided in this brochure is based upon the "conventional construction" parameters of the most current edition of the California Residential Code (which is based on the most current edition of the International Residential Code). Please be aware, specialized engineered structural systems or techniques that were used in your existing home or unusual features of your proposed home may require design by a State of California licensed Professional Engineer or Architect.

IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?



Most construction work requires a permit and additional inspections to help assure that unsafe conditions are not created.

There are certain exceptions to this rule. These include:

1. One-story, detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does **not exceed 120 square feet and the roof deck height does not exceed 11'7"**.
2. Fences not over 7' high, not used as a pool, spa or hot tub barrier.
3. Retaining walls when constructed of concrete or masonry, without a surcharge that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall.
4. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2:1.
5. Sidewalks and driveways. You may need to speak with Engineering regarding an Encroachment Permit for any work on sidewalks and driveways.
6. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
7. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.

8. Swings and other playground equipment.
9. Window awnings in Group R-3 & U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
10. Decks not exceeding 200 square feet in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve the exit door.
11. Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
12. Minor electrical repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
13. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.
14. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste, or vent pipe, however, if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste, or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit would be required.
15. Portable heating appliances; portable ventilation equipment; portable cooling units; and portable evaporative coolers and replacement of any minor parts of mechanical systems that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.



Although a permit may not be required, there may be other zoning regulations that apply. For instance, the Planning Division may regulate fence heights and locations. If you are uncertain about your project, a telephone call or visit to the Planning Division before commencing work may save some time and headaches.

PLAN PREPARATION

The key to obtaining a permit with the shortest delays and the least amount of frustration lies in the proper preparation of plans. Plan preparation should



show specifically what is to be done, where the work is to be completed on your property, and how the project will be constructed. An accurate and detailed drawing is the only practical way of creating mutual understanding and expectations between you, the Building Safety Division staff, and the Building Inspector.

If you have doubts that your project/plan may not be approved, preliminary information can be obtained at the Building Safety Division counter during plan preparation. Often a few minutes of conversation and a sketch can save redrawing of plans by resolving concerns before final working drawings are completed.

Most building divisions require, a site plan of your property showing the location of the work accompany the building permit application. A site or plot plan is a view of your entire property looking down from above. It must include all property lines, all structures located on the property, the street, the driveway and the location of any proposed work to be done. A sample site plan may also be available through the Building Safety Division.

In addition to the required site plan, the size and complexity of your project will determine how extensive your plans must be. Changing out windows or adding electrical outlets may only require existing room uses, dimensions and window sizes. A patio or similar structure will require a drawing or sketch showing how the structure will be built, including the size and spacing of structural members and the methods intended to be used in making the connections of the structure and attachments to the existing building and the size of the footings.

If you are planning to construct a new home, or just a room addition, additional plans prepared by a California registered architect or civil/structural engineer may be required. Certain State of California requirements are extremely complex, and typically beyond the capabilities of the average homeowner. These State requirements alone make obtaining professional help advisable. In addition, when new habitable space floor area is added or converted, an energy efficiency report is also required. General plan submittal requirements are available on our website.

SUBMITTAL FOR PLAN REVIEW

The Building Safety Division will only accept construction documents submitted for a building permit in electronic format. Upon approval of your plans, an electronic set of all approved documents will be emailed to the Contractor or Homeowner.



Additional information:

- A. You will be asked to fill out an application to construct for your building permit. You will need to specify the type of work proposed. The square footage, construction type and use of new buildings or additions is required. The property owner, applicant and licensed contractor information including address, telephone number, and email address is required on the application form. If applicable, please also provide the architect and engineer information. You can obtain an application form from our website at <https://www.cityoftracy.org/home/showpublisheddocument/12840/637854482675470000> or at the Receptions desk in City Hall.
- B. When plans are required (including site plans) a plan check fee must be paid prior to the start of the plan review process.
- C. Applications for permit for any proposed work for which no permit is issued shall expire 180 days after the date of filing. Extensions must be requested by the applicant and may be granted for 180 days.

PERMIT ISSUANCE



At the time of permit issuance certain fees may be required that are specific to your project. A preliminary estimate of fees is advisable before the expense and effort of final plan preparation is undertaken. We urge you to contact the Building Safety Division for more information.

After all required departments have approved the plans, a permit to construct may be issued. The permit and plans may **ONLY** be issued to a California licensed contractor or a homeowner. When your building permit is issued, an electronic copy of the approved plans will be emailed to you along with an Inspection Record. The plans and Inspection Record are to be kept at the project location and must be available for the inspector's use whenever they visit your property for inspections. With your permit in hand you are now ready to proceed with construction.

REQUESTING INSPECTIONS

Inspections may be scheduled by phone at (209) 831-6400. You may also schedule them online through your eTRAKiT account. Inspections can be requested as early as the next business day. **Make sure that when you request an inspection you provide your name and phone number where you can be reached along with the permit number, the site address, and the type of inspection that you are requesting.**

THE INSPECTION PROCESS

INSPECTION RECORD			PERMIT COMPLETED		
CITY OF TRACY			POST IN CONSTRUCTION PLACE		
Development & Engineering Services Department 333 Civic Center Plaza • Office: (209) 831-6400 • Fax: (209) 831-6459					
Application Date:	Major Cross Street:				
Permit Number:	APN:				
Issuance Date:	Project Description:				
Project Address:	Telephone:				
Project Owner:	Mailing Address:		PERMITTYPE		
Mailing Address:	Telephone:				
Contractor Name:	Mailing Address:		Type:		
Mailing Address:	Type:				
Validation:	Type:				
Obtain Building Inspector's signature prior to covering each phase of work noted below					
Inspection Type	Inspector	Date	Inspection Type	Inspector	Date
Underground Plumbing			Over Wall		
Underground Electrical			Show/Fan		
Underground Mechanical			Electric Service		
Storm Drain			Gas Service		
Chimney			Water Meter Release		
Footings/Piers			Roof Tie-Off		
Site Ground			Roof Structural Frame		
Wall			Roof Deck/Decking		
Under Floor Framing			Roof Pile-Grade		
Under Floor Electrical			Roof Deck		
Under Floor Mechanical			Roof Pile-Propose		
Under Floor Electrical			Demolition		
Under Floor Mechanical			Roof Demolition Pre-Backup		
Under Floor Electrical			Suspended Ceiling		
Under Floor Mechanical			Tie-Ins/Traps		
Interior Shear			Masonry/Block Wall		
Interior Shear			Low-Rise Supports (Max. 1000)		
Roof Decking			FINAL INSPECTIONS		
Rough Frame			Final Demolition		
Rough Plumbing			Final Roof		
Rough Mechanical			Final Floor		
Rough Electrical			Final Water Heater		
Gas Fire Sprinkler/Hydro			Final HVAC		
Window Flashing			Final Solar		
Wall			Final Accessibility		
Wall Insulation			Final Framing		
Ceiling Insulation			Final Electrical		
Concrete Non-Fin Coat			Final Mechanical		
Concrete Non-Fin 2nd Layer			Final Documentation		
Site Test			FINAL BUILDING		

BUILDING INSPECTION REQUESTS CAN BE MADE ONLINE THROUGH eTRAKiT UP TO 120 AN THE DAY OF THE DESIRED INSPECTION
PLEASE REMEMBER WE ARE CLOSED EVERY OTHER FRIDAY
BUILDING INSPECTION REQUESTS ONLINE: <https://www.ci.tracy.ca.gov/permits>
FOR FIRE INSPECTION REQUESTS CALL (209) 831-4736 (22 HOURS PRIOR)

When the building inspector visits your project, someone 18yrs of age or older must be on site. The approved plans must be available for comparison with the work, and the Inspection Record must be available for the inspector's signature if the work passes the inspection. If there are corrections to be made before approval, the inspector will leave a "correction notice" briefly outlining the things required to be completed prior to approval of that portion of the project. Time delays and re-inspections can be avoided if you make sure that work is complete before the inspector arrives. Any necessary tests should have been done ahead of time to assure acceptance and compliance.

Your inspector can provide you with a lot of useful information about the codes and inspections but cannot act as a construction supervisor. If you are not reasonably familiar with construction procedures it may be to your advantage to hire a licensed contractor or tradesperson to do the work or assist you.

PLAN CHANGES

If you decide during the construction process that a change is desirable or if the building area or structural features are to be modified, it is necessary that a revision be reviewed & approved through the Building Safety Division staff. All revisions are billed on an hourly basis and these fees must be paid prior to the issuance of any revised plans & documents. If you have questions regarding a need for plan change approval, call and ask.

INSPECTIONS



During construction of your project the majority of contacts with the Building Safety Division will be through the field inspection staff when they visit your property.

City building regulations require that certain inspections be made prior to covering that portion of construction, for example, a framing inspection before drywall is applied. On typical residential construction this means that you must request inspections at certain stages of the project before proceeding. These inspection stages typically are as follows:

- **Foundation inspection:** To be made when trenches have been excavated, forms are set, and all steel reinforcing, hold down hardware and/or anchor bolts are in place.
- **Concrete slab or underfloor inspection:** To be made after all in-slab or under-floor equipment, piping, conduit, etc. are in place, but before the concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed.
- **Roof sheathing and shear panel-nailing inspection:** To be made when the roof sheathing and shear panels are installed and entirely nailed off.
- **Framing & Rough inspection:** To be made after all framing, fire blocking, and bracing are in place; all pipes, chimneys and vents are complete, roof covering is in place, rough electrical wiring, plumbing piping, and heating ducts are installed and fire sprinkler system approved by Fire Department when required.
- **Insulation inspection:** To be made when all insulation is installed, and all openings and gaps in the shell of the building have been caulked or sealed.
- **Lath and/or gypsum board inspection:** To be made after all lathing and gypsum board, interior and exterior, is in place and nailed but before plaster has been applied or before gypsum board joints and fasteners have been taped and finished.
- **Final inspection:** To be made after finish grading, building is complete and ready for occupancy, and all plumbing and electrical fixtures and appliances are installed.

Other inspections may be required as well as those outlined above. For instance, pressure tests are necessary for water and gas piping, and water tests of drainage and sewer piping are likewise required. The inspectors may also advise you of the need for additional inspections if they believe special attention is required for some areas of your project.

AVOIDING PERMIT EXPIRATION

Every permit issued by the Building Official under the provisions of the California Building Code, shall expire by limitation and become null and void if the building or work authorized by such permit is not commenced within 1 year from the date of issuance. Once inspections have started, your permit expires if a valid inspection is not made within 180 days.

If your permit expires, before work can be continued, a new permit shall be obtained. If new building codes become effective during expiration, the new permit and building plans may be subject to the new requirements.

Prior to expiration and upon written request, only two 180-day extension may be granted under a new code cycle.

FINAL APPROVAL

If your project has conditions of approval from other departments that are not yet met, those approvals will be required prior to requesting final inspection from the Building Safety division. To obtain approvals for your project, call the Building Safety division and request information regarding these conditions.

After the building inspector completes his inspection, and all requirements have been satisfied, your project will be approved. If a new electric or gas service has been installed as a part of your project and approved by the inspector, they will see that the utility company is notified. Note: you must also call and arrange for installation of the electrical meters from the utility company.

SUMMARY

We have attempted to provide useful, but very general information. To ensure that your project proceeds without any delays, consider the following:

- Before doing anything, check with Building and Planning on whether or not your proposed project would be allowed at your property.
- Plan carefully. Make sure plans are complete and clearly indicate what you are going to do, where you are going to do it and how you propose to do it.
- If you do not have basic design or construction skills, consider hiring help from professionals.
- Call for inspections ahead of time and recheck your work before the inspector arrives, thereby avoiding reinspections, or additional inspection fees.
- Coordinate final inspection with Planning, Public Works and with the serving utilities, if needed.

We are here to help you during your construction project. We urge you to utilize the services of the Building Safety division when you need guidance or have questions as you proceed through the building experience.

Together we can make your efforts more productive and less frustrating.

Remember, when in doubt, give us a call and ask for help. It is easier and more satisfying when we can prevent a problem before it develops. Building Safety Division staff can be reached at 209-831-6400 or plancheck@cityoftracy.org. Additional submittal information can be found at www.cityoftracy.org

FAQ's

- **Do I need construction drawings (plans) to obtain a permit?**

Depending on your project type, required drawings may include a site plan, foundation, floor, framing, and roof plans, building elevations and sections, construction details and structural calculations. When new floor area is added or converted, an energy efficiency report is also required.

- **Am I required to hire an architect or engineer?**

When plans are required, it may be advisable to have an experienced design professional, such as a licensed architect or engineer assist you. Plans for nonstructural alterations, can be drawn by anyone. For projects involving structural modifications, plans and calculations are typically required and must be prepared, signed and stamped by an architect or engineer licensed in the state of California.

- **Do I need a permit to Demo a pool or structure?**

Yes, a permit is required for the demolition of any item that required a permit to build. On our Building Safety web page, we have a process that details out what information is needed for the demolition of a pool or structure. It is important to inspect items that have been demolished to ensure that all items have been safely removed along with any corresponding utilities.

- **How long does plan check take?**

We complete plan reviews in date order and do our best to respond as soon as possible. The following are our time frames for plan review.

Minor projects and Photovoltaic	5-10 working days
Larger Projects - 1st Review	20 working days
- Subsequent Reviews	10 working days

- **How much will the building permit cost?**

Permit fees depend on project scope and complexity and are based on the market value of labor and materials. Basic permit fees reflect the estimated reasonable cost to provide any necessary plan review and inspection services and maintain City records. Plan Check fees are collected at the time you submit plans for review. The balance of permit fees is due prior to permit issuance. Additional plan review fees may be required if corrections still exist after three submissions. Staff is available to assist you with fee calculations.

- **Do I need to hire a contractor?**

Homeowners can act as their own contractor (owner-builder) on their residence but we recommend that you hire a licensed and properly insured contractor unless you are experienced in construction work and intend to do the work yourself. You can verify the status of a contractor's license and find excellent information on how to select the contractor from the Contractor's State License Board at <http://www.cslb.ca.gov>.

- **Who can get a building permit?**

Either the property owner or a properly licensed contractor may obtain a permit. Contractors must provide proof of identification, current California State Contractors License, current City Business License, proof of valid and current Worker's Compensation Insurance and a Letter of Authorization if the applicant is not the license holder. Owner/Builders may have to provide proof of ownership if a recent transfer or purchase has taken place or if the owner is a company, corporation or trust. Authorization from the owner is required if the applicant is an authorized agent. Homeowners must complete, sign and submit an Owner/ Builder Declaration Form.

- **What time of the day is construction work allowed?**

Upon issuance of the permit, you will be provided with an Inspection Record. You must post the card in a conspicuous location near the work. Construction noise is prohibited between 10pm to 7am, 7-days a week.

- **How long do I have to complete the work?**

You must begin construction and receive an inspection within 1 year of permit issuance. To keep a permit active, an approved inspection must be performed every 180 days.

- **What if I want to make changes to my project after the permit is issued?**

City staff must approve changes to permit and plans prior to scheduling related inspections. If the scope of the proposed change is different than the scope of work shown on your permit, you will need to have your building permit revised and reissued. If plans were originally required with your permit, the changes will need to be shown on the revised plan pages and submitted for review. After approval, you will be provided with the revised plans to show the City inspection staff at the construction site that your changes are authorized.

- **How do I schedule inspections?**

Inspections are conducted on City of Tracy Business Days (M-TH and every other Friday). Before covering any work, you need to call and obtain inspection approval. Our request phone number is (209) 831-6400 and must be requested at least 1 business-day prior. At certain times a longer lead time is necessary due to inspection load and staffing. We try to accommodate a preference between morning (8 to 12) and afternoon (1 to 4) as our load allows. You may also schedule online through your eTRAKiT account up to 5am the morning of the date you would like your inspection to be.

To provide excellent customer service on inspections, we need you to provide our construction inspectors the following items upon their arrival:

- Inspection card given to you with your permit
- Required stamped approved plans
- Work to be inspected is complete and uncovered
- Authorized representative (must be 18 or older) to allow access to the private portions of the property if applicable
- Safe and accessible construction site that poses no hazards to inspectors and construction workers