

# HOW TO OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT



## A GUIDE TO THE HOMEOWNER

Copies of the Guide can be obtained from the Building Department of  
Highlands East or on our web site: [www.highlandseast.ca](http://www.highlandseast.ca)

**Municipality of Highlands East  
Building Department**

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## When are building permits required?

The building department is responsible for enforcing Ontario's Building Code in your area. We issue permits for the construction, renovation, and demolition of buildings. You must obtain a building permit before you erect, install, extend, alter, repair or change the use of a building. We also issue permits for the installation, alteration, extension or repair of on-site sewage systems.

The definition of "building" under the building code act is as follows:

- a) A structure occupying an area greater than ten square metres consisting of a wall, roof and floor or any of them or a structural system serving the function thereof including all plumbing, works, fixtures and service systems appurtenant thereto,
- b) A structure occupying an area of ten square metres or less that contains plumbing, including the plumbing appurtenant thereto,
- c) Plumbing not located in the structure,
- d) a sewage system or
- e) Structures designated in the building code.

In general, a building permit is required to erect, install, extend, alter or repair a building. If you are unsure if a building permit is required please ask the staff at the building department.

**NOTE: ACCESSORY STRUCTURES ARE NOT PERMITTED ON VACANT LAND REGARDLESS OF SIZE.**

## Why do you need to obtain a building permit?

Building permits allow your municipality to protect the interests of both individuals and the community as a whole. By reviewing and approving building plans before any work is done, the municipality can ensure that buildings comply with:

- the Building Code, which sets standards for the design and construction of buildings to meet objectives such as health, safety, fire protection, accessibility and resource conservation
- the local zoning by-law and other planning controls on buildings
- Other applicable legislation, including conservation authority approvals and certain requirements under the Environment Protection Act.

## Projects requiring a building permit?

The following are examples of projects which **will** require building permits, but are not limited to:

- Installing or repairing all or part of a septic system
- Construction of a new home or cottage
- Addition of a carport, garage, porch or room(s) to an existing home
- Construction or finishing of rooms in the basement or attic
- Any structural work including alterations to interior partitions or the installation of new skylights, windows or doors.
- Addition of dormer(s)
- Enclosing a porch or deck
- Adding or replacing of a deck to an existing home
- Raising a building
- Excavating a crawl space to provide a full basement
- Relocating structures from one property to another or relocating a structure on the same property
- Construction or installing an accessory building or structure (not for human habitation) such as a garage, tool shed, fixed dock, etc. larger than 10 square metres (107 square feet)

- A structure less than 10 square metres attached to another structure with the total greater than 10 square meters
- A structure less than 10 square metres used for human habitation
- Solid fuel burning appliances and chimneys, etc.
- Installing any type of plumbing
- Demolishing a structure or portion of a structure

**NOTE:** Accessory buildings not for human habitation that are less than 10 square metres do not require a building permit, however, they must be in compliance with the Zoning By-law. Contact the building department to verify compliance requirements for accessory buildings and structures.

### **Planning your project and applicable laws:**

During the preliminary planning (feasibility) stage of your project it is imperative that you determine what Zoning By-laws apply to your property. Zoning By-laws regulate the use, size, location and types of buildings permitted on a parcel of land. Zoning By-law 2005-29, as amended can be obtained by visiting our web site at: [www.highlandseast.ca](http://www.highlandseast.ca).

The information you will require from the Zoning By-law will include:

- Is the proposed use permitted
- Minimum building setbacks (distance from the buildings to the property lines)
- Building height restrictions
- Total building floor area and lot coverage permitted

There may be other applicable laws that must be met prior to making application for a building permit. Some examples are as follows:

- Crowe Valley Conservation Authority (if applicable)
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Transport Canada
- Others not mentioned

### **How do you apply for a building permit?**

You can get an application for a building permit from the municipality web site, [www.highlandseast.ca](http://www.highlandseast.ca) from the building department at 1032 Gooderham Street, Gooderham or at any one of the sub offices located in Wilberforce and Cardiff. But it is a good idea to talk to the staff at your municipality before you apply. They can tell you what information, drawings and plans you have to include with the application and whether you will need any other permits or approvals. You can also have a pre-consultation with the Building Official by calling and booking an appointment. Also refer to Application Guidelines on our web site for dwellings, decks, Garage/Accessory Buildings. All other pertinent documents can be obtained at the building department.

### **What happens to your application?**

Staff at the building department will review your application to confirm that the proposed work complies with the Building Code and other applicable laws and is complete. Application for a simple alteration, addition or deck can be processed fairly quickly but more complex proposals may take longer. However, the building department will process the application and issue the building permit within 10 business days for dwellings and accessory structures.

If you require relief from the Planning Act, a building permit cannot be issued until the appeal date has expired and no objections have been documented. If your property is covered by a site plan control by-law, a building permit cannot be issued until approval from the principal authority is obtained.

#### **Permit Fee's and Permit Application Process:**

The building permit application fee of \$75.00 is due upon receipt of the building application. Once the permit is ready the rest of the fees are required before the permit is issued. Payments can be made by debit, cash, money order or cheque payable to the Municipality of Highlands East.

If in the process of reviewing the application it is found additional information is required we will contact you through the contact information you have given us. Please make sure this information is correct and legible. Please respond to our requests for information as promptly as possible in order to avoid any delays in obtaining your permit.

#### **Permit Issuance:**

Your building permit will be at the front counter upon completion of our review of your submission. A copy of the building permit, stamped approved plans and information package will be given to you at this time. The blue permit card must be posted at the entrance of your property during the construction process. If the permit card is not readable due to weather conditions, call the building department and a replacement permit card will be issued to you. The building permit, permit drawings and documents must be available on the construction site at all times for the use by the contractors and the building inspectors assigned to your building project.

Please read the permit documents thoroughly before commencing construction. The construction must be in compliance with the plans and documents issued with your permit. Any deviation from the approved drawings must be reported to the Chief Building Official, in the form of a revision to the permit. There is a fee for the revision. All revisions must be dated, signed and the section of revisions clouded.

#### **The construction must be inspected:**

The building inspectors for the municipality serve you by ensuring that the construction complies with the Ontario Building Code, Zoning By-laws for the municipality and the approved plans. It is **mandatory** for you to call for all inspections. Mandatory inspections and days assigned for bookings are included with your building permit documents. **A minimum of 48 hours notice is required.** You **MUST** quote the building permit number when booking an inspection or for any other inquiries. You will get confirmation from the staff that the inspection has been booked.

If you have hired contractors to construct the project, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that all required inspections have been completed and a final inspection approved. It is in your best interest to have these inspections carried out and any deficiencies identified by the inspectors prior to the contractor's completion of the project. If an inspection has not been done and the area has been covered, the inspector may ask you to uncover the affected area(s) so that the inspection can take place. If your building file is still open (all required inspections have not be competed) after two (2) years there will be an annual maintenance fee applied to the permit and a fee for each inspection conducted thereafter.

## **Other permits and approvals:**

### **Demolition Permits:**

If you propose to demolish any structures occupying an area greater than ten (10) square metres (107 sq. Ft.) or part of a structure, you will require a Demolition Permit. An application must be filed with the building department along with a fee of \$175.00. If you are demolishing a building/structure greater than ten (10) square metres you will need to complete a 357 application (application to the council or the assessment review board) which will reduce your tax base accordingly.

### **Change of use Permit:**

If you want to change the way you use all or part of a building, you may require a change of use permit even if you are not planning any construction. Different uses have different Building Code requirements.

### **Sewage System Permits:**

New system installations, replacements and repairs of all septic systems are submitted to and approved by the building department. It is recommended that you contract a licensed installer to help you with the application process as it can be somewhat complicated. Applications and guidelines can be obtained from our web site. A sewage permit application must be submitted at the same time as an application for a new dwelling. An application for a review of sewage disposal system must be submitted for any renovations, building additions or additional buildings Note: Guest cabins (bunkies) are considered an extra bedroom and will require a review of the current septic system.

### **Plumbing Permits:**

A plumbing permit is required for the installation, alteration or repair of drains, water lines and plumbing fixtures. However, if your project involves construction that requires a building permit, the plumbing approval will be incorporated within that permit. After your permit has been issued, you, as the homeowner, may install your own plumbing, drains and potable water lines. If you are hiring a contractor, ensure that the plumber is licensed.

### **Electrical Permit:**

Prior to the installation or alteration of electrical equipment you are required to ensure an electrical permit is obtained from the Electrical Safety Authority. A copy of the electrical certificate must be submitted to the building department prior to receiving an occupancy permit.

### **Entrance Permits:**

An entrance permit will be required for any new or revised entrances to a municipal road, county road or Provincial Road. Applications for municipal roads can be obtained from our web site.

### **General Information:**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding permit requirements, please contact the building department. We have very competent and friendly staff that will assist you with your building project. Building staff are available from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. The building department office is closed all statutory holidays.

**Our goal is to help make your building permit process an enjoyable experience.**