

Do I need a permit?

This is one of the most common questions we receive at the City of New Braunfels Building Department. A homeowner or property owner thinking about remodeling, adding a small addition, converting a garage, adding a gazebo to the backyard, replacing siding, or reroofing typically hopes the answer is “no.”

Folks seem to have an unreasonable fear of obtaining building permits and the entire inspection process. No fears—the permitting and inspection process really is not that difficult. Because many homeowner projects actually do require a permit, it might be helpful to look at some questions that might arise.

Why are there building codes and building permits?

Quite simply, building codes—including codes on structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and other components of your home—are in place to help ensure your safety.

The codes set a number of standards, all are intended to help builders, homeowners, and the communities have safe and secure buildings. Building permits are your legal permission to proceed with the project, as well as your agreement or contractor’s agreement to do the work in compliance with current codes. A house may be around for a hundred years, and there may be many owners—the Building Department wants to ensure the home is safe for many generations.

If I get a permit, can I do the work myself?

Absolutely! You can perform any construction work on a home that you own, providing it is your homestead and you are not building or remodeling the home with the specific intention of selling it in the next twelve months.

When do I need a permit?

The City of New Braunfels Building Department requires a permit any time an owner intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical, or plumbing system.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO GET A BUILDING PERMIT



What are the benefits?

Let's say you want to add a few extra electrical outlets in the garage, and a mistake is made during the installation that later causes a fire.

Is your insurance company going to cover the cost of a fire caused by illegal electrical work? One of the major benefits of obtaining a permit is having technical resources at your side—the certified building inspectors and plans examiners. Your City of New Braunfels certified building inspectors and plans examiners, with years of trade experience and code training, can work with you during your project. They can answer questions, provide guidance before you start your project, and save you time, money, and frustration.

When is a permit not required? Cosmetic work

Redecorating and minor repair jobs do not require a building permit. This includes replacing cabinets, replacing floor covering, painting and decorating, repairing sheetrock (interior walls only), replacing small areas of siding (if you are not also making structural alterations), replacing plumbing fixtures (if you are not altering the plumbing system), and replacing light fixtures and appliances (if you are not altering or replacing wiring). If you are not sure, the Building Department staff will be happy to answer your questions.

Is there a fee?

Yes. The fees vary and are based on the value of the project. Again, call us and we can give you an approximate cost over the phone.

What will I need to get a permit?

That depends on the nature of the project. For example, you will need to submit a site plan, structural drawings (if applicable), and any other documents as required by the Building Department. Call or come by, explain your project, and we can go from there.

Robert Kinsey
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City of New Braunfels