

## **When Building Permits Are Required**

Outline for When Permits are Required for Single and Two-Family Properties

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information and clarification regarding the City's requirements for requiring permits to complete works involving the construction of new or alterations to existing structures and plumbing systems for single- and two-family homes.

Building bulletins are part of the City's customer service program. They are designed to provide an improved understanding of Building Bylaw No. 11-84, 2025 and the Building Code and to reduce the costs associated with correcting infractions.

### **References and Background**

All construction in British Columbia must meet the BC Building Code and BC Plumbing Code as well as other legislation and enactments. The City of Kamloops regulates construction through the Zoning Bylaw and the Building Bylaw to ensure minimum life and safety standards are achieved. Some of the regulations that pertain to permits include the following:

- [Building Bylaw No. 11-84](#)
- [BC Building Code 2024](#)
- [BC Plumbing Code 2024](#)
- [Zoning Bylaw No. 55](#)

### **What is a Building Permit?**

A building permit grants legal permission to undertake proposed construction, alterations, or repairs of a building, plumbing, or mechanical system, as outlined within the Building Bylaw. This also includes a change of use, such as turning a garage into a habitable area.

### **What is the Purpose of a Building Permit?**

Whether you are planning to build new or renovate, building with permits helps to ensure completed work meets minimum health, structural, and safety standards. All of us have a major investment in our homes, and when that home does not comply with the BC Building Code or other regulations, the value of our investment could be reduced, and it is possible that your family, guests, or any subsequent owners could be at risk if there is improper construction. Obtaining a building permit helps to protect that investment and reduce the risk of improper or unsafe construction.

The building permit process involves examining the plans and details of construction projects against the requirements of the BC Building Code, the Zoning Bylaw, and other applicable regulations followed by limited spot checks for health, safety, and the protection of persons and property and to enforce the regulations. An Occupancy certificate is issued to the owner/agent when/if all required inspections are completed.

## Who Can Apply for a Building Permit?

Only the owner, as described within the Building Bylaw, or the owner's agent/contractor with a signed Owners Authorization Form can apply for a permit. Where there is more than one owner, only a single signature is required to apply for most building permits. Work within a strata building or mobile home park will require written verification from the strata or park manager.

## Do I Need a City Permit for Electrical and/or Gas Work?

Electrical or gas work must be completed by certified tradesperson or an owner, as regulated by the *Safety Act*. These types of permits are issued and regulated by Technical Safety BC. However, work taken out through Technical Safety BC may also require a City Plumbing permit to ensure BC building and plumbing regulations are also being met. This may come into play when:

- a furnace is changed (low to high efficiency) or relocated requiring a review of heat loss calculations, duct sizing, fire blocking, etc.
- a gas hot water tank and or tankless ("on demand") system is relocated

Please contact Technical Safety BC at [TechnicalSafetyBC.ca](http://TechnicalSafetyBC.ca) or 1-866-566-7233 for further information regarding electrical and gas permits.

## How Long Does It Take to Get a Permit?

The Building Inspection Section has made significant changes to improve the processing times of permit applications. If a substantially completed application is provided, then the Building Inspection Section can typically issue minor permits within 10 working days and major additions and new construction permits within two to three weeks. Please review the application checklists attached to each permit type to ensure the required information is provided at time of application.

Click here for permit applications: Building Permit Applications or go to [Kamloops.ca](http://Kamloops.ca)

## When is a Building/Plumbing Permit Required?

The following is a guide to when permits will and will not be required. Each type of permit is unique, and exceptions can arise, particularly work to an existing building or landscaping. Certain minor projects listed as exempt may require a permit if it is determined that the proposed work could structurally compromise a structure or adjacent property (excavating for retaining walls near another building or structure) or is proposed within an environmentally (lake or creek) or geotechnical (steep slope) sensitive areas. It is also important to verify if there are any other changes on title, such as no build covenants, easements, or statutory rights-of-way that could restrict your building project. If you are unsure if a permit is required, please contact the Building Inspection Section at 250-828-3554.

For more information on Land Title Searches or contact BC Land Title and Survey at [LTSA.ca](http://LTSA.ca) or 1-877-577-5872.

Please contact the Building Inspection Section 250-828-3554 or email at [building@kamloops.ca](mailto:building@kamloops.ca) for further clarification.

Building and/or plumbing permits are required for the following work to:

1. New Homes and Demolitions

- construct a new house, garden suite, or duplex
- demolish a house or part of an existing house, duplex or structure
- locate or relocate an existing home, mobile home, or manufactured home

See [Kamloops.ca/BuildingPermits](http://Kamloops.ca/BuildingPermits) for applications and forms or visit the Building Inspection Section on the second floor at 105 Seymour Street, Kamloops, BC.

Please note that new dwelling units or substantial additions will require registration with [BC Housing's Licensing and Consumer Services](#). For further information, contact BC Housing at 1-800-407-7757.

2. Exterior Renovations and Additions

The following work will require a permit:

- add to an existing home or detached structure, including attaching pergolas or roof additions to existing structures
- construct a deck that is either
  - attached to a building or;
  - supporting a roof that carries a snow load
- construct a porch or balcony or significantly, alter structure, or guards, for existing decks or balconies
- construct a basement walkout (door well)
- enclose carport to create a garage
- construct a heated or unheated sunroom or enclose an existing balcony
- construct roofing with structural work (i.e. adding new dormers, skylights, solar panels)
- changing the pitch of an existing roof or increasing dead loads (i.e. shakes to shingles or shingles to clay or stone)
- remove or create new openings for, or increase the size of, doors and windows

3. Interior Renovations

The following work will require a permit:

- finish a basement or other unfinished space
- create a secondary suite
- excavate a basement to increase existing headroom/underpinning foundation walls
- install, change, remove, or repair, load-bearing walls and other structural components
- removal of drywall on fire separations or exterior walls
- removal, relocation, or openings of interior non-load bearing walls and drop ceilings
- changing use of existing rooms (i.e. creating a new bedroom out of existing space)
- installing new or alterations to stairs
- change of use (i.e. garage to living area or creation of home-based business)

4. Plumbing & Solar Hot Water & Photovoltaic Solar systems

The following work will require a permit:

- install new, repair, or replace on-site water or sewer services
- install new, add, remove, or relocate plumbing drainage, venting, or water lines
- relocate hot water tanks or change to a new hot water system (i.e. hot water tank to tankless system).
- installing a testable backflow preventer in a commercial, industrial or multifamily premise (i.e. apartments, restaurants, production facilities, repair garages, multi-use facilities)
- install or modify heating system including ductless systems
- install a gas fireplace as a heating appliance
- construct a chimney serving a solid fuel fire appliance
- install solar hot water systems

Personnel performing the above work shall either:

- a) possess a tradesman's qualification certification as a plumber
- b) be an indentured apprentice supervised by a journeyman who meets the criteria set out in Clause (a)
- c) be a registered owner and occupant or intended occupant of the single-family dwelling in which the plumbing work will occur

**Note:** All commercial plumbing work is required to be performed by trade qualified plumbers, as noted in a) and b).

## 5. Detached Buildings and Structures

The following work will require a permit:

- construct/demolish an accessory residential building(s)
- pergolas and trellis constructed with a roof
- change a building's use (i.e. convert carport to garage or garage to living space, garden suite, or home-based business)

Please note sheds shall not be constructed in an environmental or geotechnical sensitive area. Roof drainage should also be taken into consideration and should not be directed to City or neighbouring properties.

## 6. Landscaping, Pools, and Water Features

The following work will require a permit:

- construct retaining walls that are surcharged (supporting slopes greater than 2:1, supporting driveways, pools, stacked walls, steep terrain, etc.) and/or retaining walls over 1.2 m in height
- propose a new driveway access to a city street or lane
- install a pool or other water features that are greater than 600 mm (24 in.) in depth, including hot tubs or spas.
- outdoor fireplaces and kitchens - Kamloops Fire Rescue confirmation may be required

Please note that work in environmentally or geotechnical sensitive areas may still require a review.

## 7. Fire and Flood Damage Repairs

An inspection should be arranged by the owner or restoration contractor when Kamloops Fire Rescue or an engineer has completed their investigation to determine if permits will be required. Permits for repair work are expedited to not delay the repair process.

# **When a Building/Plumbing Permit is Not Required\***

A building permit or plumbing permit IS NOT required to do the following (note: work in environmentally or geotechnical sensitive areas may still require a review):

- construct a retaining wall that is not surcharged or supporting soil greater than 2:1 slopes and/or is less than 1.2 m in height or in the opinion of the Building Official, does not constitute a potential unsafe condition
- replace windows, doors, and skylights where there are no changes to opening sizes or structural modifications
- reroofing of structures does not alter the dead loads or slope of the existing roof structure
- work under the jurisdiction of [Technical Safety BC](#), such as electrical or gas (permits are required to be obtained from [Technical Safety BC](#))
- minor repairs or maintenance of deck (note: complete removal of structural materials or guards will require a permit)
- paint or decorate, install new floor coverings, and/or repoint brick veneer
- install a fence (note zoning regulations for height and material restrictions)
- install kitchen or bathroom cupboards without plumbing alterations (permit is required if removing walls or drywall)

- replace exterior finishes (cladding, soffits, trim, gutters) with like materials - contact the Building Inspection Section when closer than 1.2 m (4 ft.) from a property line (please note wildfire covenant areas require certain materials to be used)
- install landscaping (soft)—turf, gardens, etc. (note: [Tree Protection Bylaw No. 50-1](#))
- resurface existing driveways and walkways (control drainage on site)
- replace, repair, or upgrade existing plumbing fixtures (i.e. faucets, sinks, toilets, hose bibs, etc.) in the same location
- replace hot water tanks in the same location (note: it is a Plumbing Code requirement to have an expansion tank installed as per the expansion tank manufacturers' instructions, if a means for expansion of the water system is not already installed. some insurance providers may also require this)
- install, repair, or add to a residential irrigation system (note: it is a Plumbing Code and Canadian Standards Association requirement to install a dual check valve on the irrigation water supply, which protects the water system in your home from the irrigation system backflowing into your homes water system)

## Penalties and Additional Fees

Starting work without the benefit of a building or plumbing permit can lead to:

- a stop work order being posted, which will cause delays in the building project
- potential remedial repairs and removal of materials, adding additional costs to your project
- fines for working in or occupying a building
- doubling of permit fees, adding to the costs to your project
- a notice on title indicating works have been completed without permits

## Resources

### **Worker Safety - WorkSafeBC**

Owners are responsible for ensuring worker safety regulations are followed and that contractors are aware of the *Worker's Compensation Act Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* pertaining to hazardous materials. A hazardous assessment will be required prior to issuance of a building permit for all renovations/additions for homes older than 1992.

Please visit [WorkSafeBC.com/en/Health-Safety/Industries/Construction/Types/Restoration-Renovation-Demolition](http://WorkSafeBC.com/en/Health-Safety/Industries/Construction/Types/Restoration-Renovation-Demolition) for further information.

### **Call Before You Dig**

Please contact BC One Call at 1-800-474-6886 or [BC1C.ca](http://BC1C.ca).

***Have questions? We're here to help. Please contact the Building Inspection Section at 250-828-3554 or [building@kamloops.ca](mailto:building@kamloops.ca) for more information.***

Please note: Building Bulletins are prepared to provide convenient information for customers and should not be considered a replacement for reviewing the bylaw or associated legal documents. If there is any contradiction between this guide and relevant municipal bylaws and/or applicable codes, please refer to the bylaws and/or codes for legal authority.