

About Construction Permits

The Department of Buildings (DOB) reviews construction plans to ensure that they comply with the Building Code and meet current safety standards and zoning requirements. Once plans are approved, a contractor or contractor's representative may apply for a construction work permit.

Categories of construction work

DOB divides construction work into two main categories: New Buildings (NB) and Alterations (ALT). Alterations are further divided into three types—**ALT1s**, **ALT2s** and **ALT3s**—depending upon the scope of work.

An **ALT1** is a major alteration in which the use or occupancy of an existing property changes. Some examples of ALT1s include:

- Changing the occupancy of a one-family home to a two-family home
- Changing the use of a facility from commercial to residential
- Changing the building's egress

An **ALT2** is an alteration in which the use or occupancy of a facility does not change, but includes multiple work types, i.e., plumbing and construction.

ALT1s and ALT2s must be filed by a registered architect or licensed engineer.

An **ALT3** is a minor alteration that involves only one work type such as a curb cut or construction fence. Certain ALT3s do not require detailed plans and can be filed by a non professional.

Types of permits issued by DOB

Although different types of work can be done under one application, more than one permit may be required. For example, there are separate permits for plumbing and construction work.

For electrical work, you must get a separate permit directly from DOB's Bureau of Electrical Control. See Electrical and Plumbing "Building Knowledge" brochures.

Time it takes to get plans approved

The timeframe varies. However, an architect or engineer can expedite the process by using DOB's PC Filing application program and professionally certifying that the plans conform to the Building Code and local zoning laws. This can result in an approval in as little as one day.

Duration of permits

The duration of a permit is based on the length of the contractor's insurance, but cannot exceed more than one year. The expiration date is listed on the permit. Permits, with the exception of sidewalk sheds, can be renewed by mail.

Filing Fees

There are application fees and a microfiche fee, which vary depending on the scope of work and are subject to change.

Contact the borough office to be advised of current fees. Permit fees are as follows:

- For new building permits, fees are based on the size of the building.
- For alteration permits, fees are based on a percentage of the proposed cost of construction.

In addition, DOB collects the mandatory Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) form that concerns asbestos. Contact DEP by calling 311 or log on to NYC.gov/dep for information on forms and fees.

Consequences of working without a permit

If construction work is performed without a permit, the owner of the building, as well as the individual who performed the illegal work, may be subject to violations, summonses, court appearances and fines. In addition, there may be the imposition of an additional civil penalty when plans to legalize the work are filed and a permit is sought.

To report work that is performed without a permit, call 3-1-1, or log on to DOB's website at NYC.gov/buildings to register a complaint online.

To report unprofessional conduct by an architect or engineer, contact the New York State Education Department, Office of Professionals at 518-474-3817, or DOB's Investigation and Discipline Unit at 212-442-2000.

Work that does not require a permit or approval

Cosmetic work, such as painting, plastering, plumbing fixture repair/replacement and cabinet installation, does not require plan approval or a permit. There also are exceptions for one and two-family homes (refer to the NYC Building Code).

This brochure provides general guidelines. If you have specific questions, call the DOB office in your borough.

Checklist



If you are not sure if the work you intend to do requires a permit, call the DOB office in the borough where the property is located.



With the exception of some minor alterations, the law requires that you hire a registered architect or licensed engineer to file plans and applications with DOB for work that requires a permit.

To find an architect or engineer, contact a professional organization such as your local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and/or the New York State Society of Professional Engineers.



Once plan approval is obtained, have your contractor apply for the work permit.



Upon completion of construction, arrange for DOB inspections or self-certification by licensed professionals.

For NBs and ALT1s, after completion of satisfactory inspections and submission of all required filings, DOB issues a new or amended Certificate of Occupancy that describes the legal use and occupancy of a property.

For ALT2s or ALT3s, DOB signs off the job based on its inspection or the licensed professional's notification of completion and issues a Letter of Completion.

New York City Department of Buildings

Executive Offices / 212-566-5000
280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Manhattan Borough Office
280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Bronx Borough Office
1932 Arthur Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457

Brooklyn Borough Office
210 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Queens Borough Office*
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424
(*new location effective Summer 2003)

Staten Island Borough Office
Borough Hall, Staten Island, NY 10301

Bureau of Electrical Control
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, New York, NY 10007

Investigation and Discipline / 212-442-2000
11 Park Place, New York, NY 10007

Department of Investigation / 212-825-5959
80 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038

Call 311 to:

- Report illegal construction work
- Reach DOB Program Units or Borough Offices

For comprehensive information about DOB, to check the status of a filing on the Building Information System (BIS), and to download plan/work approval forms and the Building Code, visit NYC.gov/buildings.

Mission

The NYC Department of Buildings ensures the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and Zoning Resolution. We facilitate development with integrity, efficiency and professionalism.

Michael R. Bloomberg, MAYOR
Patricia J. Lancaster, AIA, COMMISSIONER

NYC **BUILDINGS**

about

Construction Permits



**BUILDING
KNOWLEDGE**