

DEVELOPMENT AND SAFETY CODES FAQ

County staff understands that building a new home or shop can sometimes be a difficult and challenging process. This process may include finding contractors, getting estimates, finalizing plans, and securing finances for the project. By the time you get to the next step of obtaining permits, you may find it intimidating, confusing, or frustrating. Over the past year, Planning and Development Services has made strides to improve and streamline processes respecting development and building-related approvals. Beginning in January 2016, Red Deer County will begin processing Safety Codes permits. To help you better understand the new procedures regarding Safety Codes, here are answers to a few frequently asked questions.

1) Is a development permit the same as a building permit?

No, a development permit approves what type of development is allowed on a particular property, and concerns itself with zoning, setback, and height regulations of the County's Land Use Bylaw. A building permit allows the construction of structures contingent on meeting the requirements of the Alberta Building Code. In simple terms, the development permit deals with the 'what' and 'where' a development may proceed, and the building permit deals with 'how' it is built.

2) How do I get a development permit application?

Development permit application forms are available at the Red Deer County Centre or can be downloaded from the County's website at www.rdcountry.ca.

3) In addition to the application, what do I sketch on the site plan?

To the best of your ability, the site plan should include the following:

- The location of existing buildings;
- Distances from the proposed development to the front, rear, and side yards of the property;
- The location of any water bodies on the property;
- Location of the driveway;
- All developed or undeveloped road allowances adjacent to the property;
- Indicate the North direction;
- Location of right-of-way and easements within and abutting the subject property;
- Existing and proposed accesses on property

4) How long does it take to get a development permit?

According to the Municipal Government Act, a Development Authority has 40 days in which to make a decision on a completed development permit application. If further information has been requested upon receipt of an application, the 40 days begins after all of the necessary information has been provided. Generally, a straightforward application never takes this long, but it is advised to plan ahead and submit your application well in advance of starting the development.

5) When can I start my development?

You may begin your development after a development permit has been issued by the County. For discretionary uses, a Notice of Decision will be sent out prior to the development permit. There will be a two week appeal period after the issuance of the Notice of Decision, and only after this period is over will the development permit be issued.

6) I am building a new house and the County has issued the development permit, do I need any other permits?

In addition to the development permit, other permits are required such as building, electrical, gas, plumbing, and private sewage permits. These permits ensure that your construction is done in accordance with the Safety Codes Act. Building without the proper permits and inspections can also lead to unsafe conditions and costly repairs in the future.

7) When are building permits required?

Building permits are required under the Alberta Safety Codes Act to make sure the construction and use of the building will be safe. Building permits are required for construction, alteration, repair, relocation, demolition, or change of use of any building. Certain farm buildings, and non-hazardous accessory buildings under 10 square metres, are exempt. All installations of modular, move-on, or prefabricated homes require a Building Permit.

8) Why do I need a building permit?

Through the application for a building permit, the County's Safety Codes Officer will ensure that the design and construction of a building complies with the requirements of the Alberta Building Code. The primary purpose of the Alberta Building Code is to set out minimum requirements for buildings to ensure public health, fire protection, and structural adequacy. Once you have applied for a building permit, a Safety Codes Officer will review the submitted plans and produce a plan check letter detailing code requirements and the mandatory site inspections. It is the permit holder's responsibility to request the inspections at the various project milestones, so that the Safety Codes Officer can inspect the project to ensure compliance with the code.

9) How do I apply for a building permit?

Building permit applications may be made in person at the Red Deer County Centre.

10) What do I need before applying for a building permit?

In order to issue a building permit, the applicant must submit:

- Completed permit application form;
- Three (3) complete sets of construction documents which include: cross section, elevations, floor plan, and foundation;
- Copy of the site plan showing the size, shape, and position of the proposed building on the lot;
- Copy of the approved municipal development permit;
- Payment

11) Do I need New Home Warranty?

New residential building permits will NOT be issued by the municipality until builders acquire a New Home Warranty. New homes would, at minimum, include a warranty for:

- One year labour and materials;
- Two years for defects in labour and materials related to delivery and distribution systems;
- Five years building envelope protection, with a requirement for the warranty provider to offer the consumer the option to purchase additional years of coverage;
- Ten years coverage for major structural components

Learn more about Alberta's Better Warranty Standards and get to know your role at www.homewarranty.alberta.ca

12) How long does it take to get a building permit?

A building permit is normally processed within two weeks for residential and commercial projects. This is provided that an approved development permit has been issued and all of the information has been supplied to the satisfaction of the Safety Codes Officer.

13) Do I need a building permit to relocate a manufactured home?

Although manufactured homes are built to the CSA and Alberta Labour standards, you need a building permit to ensure that the foundation, anchorage, site preparation, crawlspace, decks, landings, etc. meet the Alberta Building Code requirements. Electrical, plumbing, and gas permits are also required for the connections to the unit.



14) How long is a permit good for?

The permit is valid for one year, provided the project is not abandoned for more than 120 days and work is commenced within 90 days of the permit issuance. A permit may be extended at the discretion of the Development Authority provided that the applicant can provide evidence that delays for submission for approval documents were due to a government, agency, or other reason beyond the applicant's reasonable control.

15) Is the involvement of a professional engineer or a registered architect required for Preserved Wood Foundation (PWF)?

The code allows preserved wood foundations to either be designed by a professional or designed and constructed in accordance with the CSA standard CAN/CSA-S406-92.

16) As the homeowner, am I allowed to take out a permit (plumbing/private sewage, gas, or electrical) for my contractor who is doing the work?

A homeowner is ultimately responsible for all work being undertaken, although the County would prefer that contractors take out the permits, unless the homeowner is completing the work themselves.

17) I am a homeowner acting as general contractor for my new home. I want to take out all the permits myself but I will be hiring trades-people for most of the work. Is this acceptable?

Anyone can apply for the building permit, however, unless you are completing the electrical, plumbing, gas, and private sewage work yourself, the people contracted to complete the installations must take out their own permits. Please ensure that you are hiring certified contractors.

18) Does my building permit cover the electrical, plumbing, and gas installations?

The building permit covers the structural aspect of the construction. Permits are also required for the electrical, plumbing, gas, and private sewage installations.

19) How large of a garage can I build on a slab? And, do I need a permit for that?

The garage can be up to 55 square metres (approximately 600 sq. ft.) when located on a slab. Yes, you do require a building permit when building a garage.

20) Do I require a permit to install a wood-burning stove?

Yes, a building permit is required for the installation of a wood burning stove.



Red Deer County



For more information on Red Deer County:

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