

Answers To Your Building Questions

Building Department

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THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

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THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN BUILDING AN ADDITION TO A RESIDENCE

1. To obtain a building permit you must provide the City with a site plan showing where the addition is to be located in relation to the house and the lot with the distances noted to the lot lines. All other buildings, if any, on your property must be shown on this drawing.
2. Locate property lines exactly. Estimates are not acceptable. The Building Official will request you to show lot corners at the time of the foundation inspection. Approval will not be given if there is any doubt as to where they are located.
3. The building addition must meet the setback requirements that apply to the residence. Call this office to obtain the zoning district and setback information applicable to the building project. Handouts are available with setback information for most zoning districts. Setbacks are 9' side yard 30' rear yard & front yard.
4. On minor additions building plans may not be necessary, however, larger additions may require submission of plan, section, foundation and elevation drawings as determined by the Building Official.
5. You will be responsible for calling to arrange for inspections of the addition. An inspection of the footings, foundation wall, shall be made prior to pouring the concrete, a rough framing prior to insulating or drywall installation, and a final inspection when the addition has been completed is required. Electrical and plumbing permits and inspections will be required, if applicable.
6. The building permit fee is based upon the valuation of the addition, material plus labor. The valuation may be determined by a contract price, or by the Building Official using known construction costs.

7. These are only basic minimum guidelines. For further information or if you have any questions call the Building Official at (515) 433-0633.

NOTE: Utilities may need to be relocated

**THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN
BUILDING A DECK**

1. To obtain a building permit you must provide with a plot plan showing where the deck is to be located in relation to the house and the lot with the distances noted to the lot lines. All other buildings, if any, on your property must be shown on this drawing.
2. Locate property lines exactly. Estimates are not acceptable. The Building Official will request you show lot corners at the time of the foundation inspection. Approval will not be given if there is any doubt as to where they are located.
3. If you are planning to build a deck or entryway onto the front of your house, the following obstructions may be permitted in your front yard area:
 - a. The usual steps of unenclosed decks/porches which meet the approval of the Building Official.
4. Steps with three (3) or more risers shall have at least one grippable handrail.
5. If you are using posthole footings, they must be a minimum of 42" deep and of a sufficient diameter to properly support the deck.
6. Decks that are constructed more than 30 inches above grade level are required to have guardrails. Guardrails installed on decks of single family dwellings shall not be less than 36" in height and banisters installed so that a sphere 4" in diameter cannot pass through at any point.
7. You will be responsible for calling to arrange for inspections of your deck. An inspection of the foundation shall be made prior to pouring concrete of installing posts and a final inspection when the deck has been complete are required.

8. The building permit fee is based upon the valuation of the deck, material plus labor. The valuation may be determined by a contract price or by the Building Official using known construction costs.

9. These are basic minimum guidelines. For further information or if you have any questions call the Building Department at (515) 433-0633

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FINISHED BASEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All habitable rooms shall have 5 percent of the floor area in window glass for natural light and ventilation. Houses build prior to April 1, 1993 may use mechanical ventilation and artificial light. All bedrooms shall have an egress window. If there are existing bedrooms, they still need to be retrofit with egress window. See guidelines for egress windows. (Inquire about Egress window handout)

Need one egress window. If there are existing bedrooms. Previously finished basement areas in houses built prior to April 1, 1993, exempt from this requirement.

- Need outlets every 6' of wall space (6' from starting point).
- Bathrooms need as operable window or bath fan vented to the outside.
- All clothes dyers shall be vented to the outside.
- All open stairways need grippable handrails on at least one side.
- Hand wired smoke detectors shall be installed in each bedroom, areas outside each bedrooms and on each level of house.
- Electrical panels cannot be behind doors or in closets. Need 36" clear space in front of panel.
- Install combustion air into mechanical room or area.
- Wood stud wall shall have treated bottom plates when on concrete floors.
- All bedrooms circuits shall have an AFCI (Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter).

Bathrooms and bedrooms shall not open directly into mechanical rooms.

Headroom clearance shall be 7'6", except kitchens, halls and bathrooms may be 7'0", furred ducts, etc. may be 7'0", and stairways and doorways shall be 6'8". House build prior to April 1, 1993, shall be a minimum of 7'0".

Need GFI outlets in bathrooms and within 6" of laundry sinks and bar sinks.

All foam plastic insulation shall be covered with drywall.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN BUILDING A GARAGE OR ACCESSORY BUILDING

1. To obtain a building permit you must provide us with plot plan showing where the structure is to be located on the lot with the distances noted to the lot lines. All building on your property must be shown on this drawing.
2. A structure less than 120 square feet of roofed area does not require a building permit, unless permanently affixed on a concrete slab at which time all set backs must be adhered to.
3. Locate property lines exactly. Estimates are not acceptable. We will request you to show us lot pins when we come out for a foundation inspection. A permit will not be issued if there is any doubt as to where they are located.
4. Any driveway, sidewalk, or utility work in the public right-of-way (Prow) requires a public right-of-way excavation permit, see the Building Official.
5. If the proposed garage is detached, it shall be a distance of at least two (2) feet to roof overhang, from alley lot lines, and from lot lines of adjoining lots which are an "R" district on a corner lot they shall conform to the setback regulations of a main building from the side street and where garage doors face side street. The garage shall be a minimum of five (5) feet from the house (or rear wall) maximum height for a detached garage is sixteen (16) feet.
6. If the garage is attached either directly to the house or by a breezeway, it is considered part of the residence and must meet the setbacks requirements that apply to the residence.
7. If the garage is going to be attached to the house, the wall next to the house shall not have any openings other than a door which will be required to be minimum of 1-3/8" solid core wood door or steel door with a 20 minute fire rating. No glass is allowed in the door except 1/4" wired glass held with steel stops. The wall next to the

house shall be covered with 5/8" Type X sheetrock on the garage side of the wall. This sheetrock shall extend from the floor to the underside of the roof sheathing or the ceiling must be sheet rocked.

8. Frost depth footings are required if the structure is greater than 720 square feet or if it is attached to the house. Detached garages 720 square feet or less may be built on a 4" minimum reinforced slab. (EXAMPLE- A24'x24' detached garage equals 576 sq. ft therefore can be built on a slab without footing.)

9. Frost depth footings are 42" deep.

10. All new driveways shall be concrete.

NOTE: Utilities may need to be relocated.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EGRESS WINDOWS

This requirement for emergency escape and egress openings in basements and sleeping rooms is because a fire will usually have spread before the occupants are aware of the problem, and the normal exit channels will most likely be blocked. The dimensions prescribed in the code for exterior wall openings used for emergency egress and rescue, are based on extensive testing by the San Diego Building and Fire Departments to determine the proper relationships of height and width of window opening to adequately serve for both rescue and escape. The minimum of 20 inches for the width was based on two criteria: the width necessary to place a ladder within the window opening and, secondly, the width necessary to admit a firefighter with full rescue equipment. The minimum 24-inch height dimension was based on the minimum necessary to admit a firefighter with full rescue equipment.

It is the intent of the code that the windows required for emergency escape or rescue be located on the exterior of the building so that rescue can be effected from the exterior or, alternatively, so that the occupants may escape from that window to the exterior of the building without having to travel through the building itself. If these windows open into an interior courtyard, the courtyard must have an exit passageway, which provides access to the public way.

As stated in the code, these windows used for emergency escape or rescue must be operable windows. The intent is that they open from the inside without special knowledge or tools. They may be of the usual double-hung, horizontal sliding or casement windows operated by the turn of a crank.

Window wells in front of emergency escape windows must provide a minimum clear opening of 9 sq.ft, with a minimum dimension of 36 inches from the face of the glass to the face of the window well, and at least as wide as the window. When the depth of a window well exceeds 44 inches, a permanently affixed ladder or stair from that window well is required.

FENCE INFORMATION

The height, density and location of fences are regulated by the Zoning Ordinance. Fences can be constructed at the property line but are limited to four (4') feet in height in front yards and up to ten (10) feet in height in all other yards.

Before installing any type of fence, it is recommended that all property lines be located and verified. Approval will not be given if there is any doubt as to where they are located.

Front Yard: Fences in the required front yard are limited to four (4) feet in height. The required front yard is determined by your zoning district. Please contact the Building Official to determine your zoning district.

Side Yard: Fences in the side yard shall not be more than six (6) feet in height.

Rear Yard: Fences in the rear yard shall not be more than ten (10) feet in height.

If you live on a corner lot, a 25' site triangle shall be provided for visibility reasons. The site triangle shall include nothing over 2 ½ feet in height measured from the gutter of the street.

The required front, side and rear yard requirements are measure from the point at which the City right-of-way ends (not at the curb) and your property begins. If your dwelling is closer to the street than the required front yard distance, your fence must meet the required front yard requirements for your zoning district.

Maintenance of the fence is the responsibility of the owner. Finished side of the fence must face adjoining property.

For more information, or if you have any questions contact The Building Official at (515) 433-0633.