

# Why Building Permits Matter



## WHY DO I NEED A PERMIT?

**Short Answer:** A permit is required whenever you construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure – and for most installations of electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and impact-resistant coverings. This is required by the Florida Building Code (Section 105) and Florida statutes governing building permits.



## WHAT PERMITS PROTECT

- **Your safety-** permits ensure work meets the minimum structural, fire-safety, and life-safety standards in the Florida Building Code.
- **Your investment-** inspected, permitted work preserves property value and insurance coverage. (Insurance companies commonly require compliance with local code.)
- **Your neighbors & emergency responders-** correct permitting helps protect adjacent properties and ensures firefighters and EMS can safely access and respond.



## WHEN A PERMIT IS REQUIRED

**You need a building permit to:**

- Build a new structure or add to an existing one.
- Change the use/occupancy of a space.
- Substantially alter, repair, move, or demolish a structure.
- Install, replace, or enlarge electrical, plumbing, mechanical, gas systems, or impact-resistant coverings.
- Any roof repairs or replacements are highly recommended regardless of cost for insurance purposes.



## OWNER-BUILD? IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTES

If you act as your own contractor (owner-builder), you may still obtain an owner-builder permit - but you accept the responsibilities and liabilities for code compliance, inspections, and worker insurance/compensation issues. Hiring a licensed contractor transfers some responsibility; verify licenses before hiring. See Florida statutes on owner-builder and contractor responsibilities.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T GET A PERMIT

- You may be required to **remove or retrofit** the unpermitted work at your cost.
- You may face stop-work orders, fines, or civil enforcement by the local enforcing agency.
- Unpermitted work can make it difficult to sell the property, obtain insurance claims, or document code compliance.

(Florida law sets application, review, and enforcement rules for permits; local agencies must follow statutory timelines and processes.)



## HOW TO GET A PERMIT (QUICK STEPS)

1. Confirm what permit(s) you need - building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, roofing, etc.
2. Submit a completed permit application with plans/specifications to your local building department.
3. Schedule required inspections as work proceeds.
4. Obtain final approval/Certificate of Completion or Occupancy.



Scan QR Code to  
make application



## NEED HELP?

- Call **Columbia County Building Department** at 386-758-1008
- **Visit:** <https://www.columbiacountyfla.com> or scan QR Code for checklists, forms, and online applications.
- If you are unsure whether a permit is required for your project, please contact the building department before starting work.

The Florida Building Code (Section 105) and Chapters 553 & 489, Florida Statutes, require permits and establish permitting, review, and inspection procedures. This handout summarizes common situations and is not a substitute for code text or legal advice. For statutory language and official code text, see the Florida Building Code and Florida Statutes.