Frequently Asked Questions: Building & Zoning Permits



Q.) WHAT TYPES OF WORK REQUIRE A ZONING PERMIT?

Driveways, fences (under 7'), accessory structures/sheds under 200sqft, dumpster enclosures, pools, signs, pergolas, patios/sidewalks, and parking pads are permitted through the Zoning department to ensure setback requirements and ordinances are met.

Q.) WHAT TYPES OF WORK REQUIRE A BUILDING PERMIT?

A building permit is required any time you construct, alter, repair, move, or demolish anything that is regulated by the Minnesota State Building Code. Some examples include: remodels, additions, finishing unfinished basements, garages, deck installation or addition, residing, reroofing, pools over 24" deep and 5,000 gallons, and accessory structures 200sqft or larger. Also, any installations, alterations, replacement or repair work on gas, mechanical, electrical, or plumbing materials/equipment which is regulated by the State Codes is required to be permitted.
Work that is exempt from a building permit includes: painting, wallpapering, flooring, kitchen cabinets, countertops, minor repairs, repair of sidewalks and driveways (when not altering/expanding).
See the Building Department page of the City's website www.MoundsViewMN.org for handouts and information.
If you are unsure if the project you are starting requires a permit, please contact the Community Development Department for advice.

Q.) HOW DO YOU OBTAIN A BUILDING OR ZONING PERMIT?

Permit applications are submitted online. You can find the link to the online permit application system through the city's website www.MoundsViewMN.org If you don't have access to a computer, a computer kiosk is provided in the lobby of City Hall. Physical applications are also available at City Hall or found on the City's website. Applications can also be emailed, mailed, or faxed to you. If you need help filling out the application, a staff member will be happy to assist you.

Q.) HOW MUCH DOES A BUILDING OR ZONING PERMIT COST?

See the Fee Schedule on the city website www.MoundsViewMN.org Zoning permits are a standard fixed fee. Building permits are either a flat fee or calculated based on project valuation. Other fees may also apply. If you wish to receive a permit estimate, contact the Community Development Department.

Q.) DO I NEED TO HIRE A CONTRACTOR, OR CAN I DO THE WORK MYSELF? A property owner has the right to do work on their own structures and property (*with permits and exceptions*). Whether you should hire a contractor largely lies with your abilities to do the work yourself. If you aren't comfortable doing electrical wiring for example, you *should* hire an electrical contractor. Hiring a licensed contractor helps protect you from certain liabilities, and the required permit comes with certain assurances: such as verifying that the contractor is licensed (current), and insured (and/or bonded). A licensed contractor is legally bound to build to the MN State code requirements. And the State has resources for investigating contractors and/or helping homeowners recover funds if a contractor does not act in good faith.



Exceptions for whether a property owner can do their own work include:
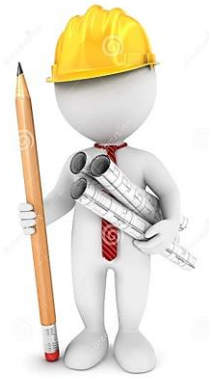
- Commercial property owners are required to hire a licensed contractor for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work.
- Residential property owners who have bought a property for speculation/resale are required to hire a licensed contractor for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work.
- Rental property owners are required to hire a licensed contractor for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work.

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Q.) ARE CONTRACTORS REQUIRED TO BE LICENSED?

To help protect homeowners, Minnesota law requires residential builders, remodelers, roofers, electricians, and plumbers to be licensed through the State. Mechanical contractors are required to be licensed through the City if not already through the State. Contractors are legally required to provide you their license number. You can verify if a contractor has a valid and current license via the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry website.
If a contractor asks you to obtain a permit for him or tells you that he can do the work cheaper because he is not licensed, he should be reported immediately to the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. The Minnesota Attorney General's Office and MN Department of Labor & Industry have a number of handouts available about hiring residential contractors. You are encouraged to contact them or visit their web sites for more information.

Q.) WHAT TYPE OF PLANS NEED TO BE SUBMITTED?



Digital (PDF) is required in most cases, but paper copies are acceptable. The purpose of developing a set of plans and/or drawings is to provide written documentation of the scope of your project. It is important the plans be as detailed as possible. **Plans** need to show and/or describe *HOW* your project is going to be built, not just what it will look like. A staff member will review your plans to determine whether the proposed work complies with State building codes and City ordinances. The goal is to uncover potential problems and non-compliance while the project is still on paper to save costly corrections later. The approved plan set with notes must be available to the inspector when conducting inspections.

Q.) HOW SHOULD PLANS BE PREPARED? WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

The scale of the project determines if detailed plans are needed, or if a description is sufficient. Drawn plans must be neat, easy to read, and to a useable scale (one-quarter inch to one foot is common). They should include dimensions and information on use of rooms, windows and doors, smoke and CO detector locations, and wall details (insulation, headers, lumber sizes and spacing, etc). Some residential plans should include a site plan (homes, decks, additions, and garages), floor plans, cross sections, elevations, and details of any structural components.
See the Building Department page of the City's website www.MoundsViewMN.org for handouts and information.

Q.) DOES AN ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER NEED TO PREPARE THE PLANS?

The short answer is no. You (or the contractor) can create plans, or a drafting service can prepare them for you. *However*- if the project is complex, it may be required that a licensed architect or engineer provide detailed drawings and code verifications as a part of the plan review process. Particularly if the design involves structural components or complicated framing techniques. Also, if multiple contractors are bidding on your project, you will be better able to compare bids off one set of plans rather than have each contractor prepare a set. The Community Development Department can consult and assist in helping achieve code compliance, but cannot assist in the design.



Q.) HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET A PERMIT?

It is very important to plan ahead and have the permit application with plans submitted well in advance, so the permit approval process does not delay the start of a project.
Permits that require no plan review are *typically* issued within 1-3 business days. Permits where review of plans is necessary can take from a few days to two weeks or more. Some plans may need to be reviewed by more than one city department.

Q.) WHAT HAPPENS IF I START WORK WITHOUT A PERMIT?

Failure to obtain a permit prior to the start of a project is a violation of City ordinance and State law. The building code includes provisions for permit fees to be doubled, and additional fines may also be applied. The project may be stopped by the Building or Fire Official until proper permits are obtained.

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Q.) WHAT INSPECTIONS ARE REQUIRED?

All permitted work is subject to a minimum of one (final) inspection. The number and type of inspections vary depending on the work being done. Along with the issued permit will be a list of all the required inspections and how to schedule them. It is the *permit holder's* responsibility to call for required inspections when the work is ready, and/or for a final when the project is complete. A minimum of 24 hours' notice is required to schedule an inspection.
Permits without all the required inspections become void and/or cancelled 180 days after issuance or last inspection. This is public record for any future searches by potential buyers, real estate and insurance agents, etc. See the Building Inspections & Permits page of the City's website at www.MoundsViewMN.org for specific project handouts and inspection information.

Q.) WHY ARE PERMITS REQUIRED?

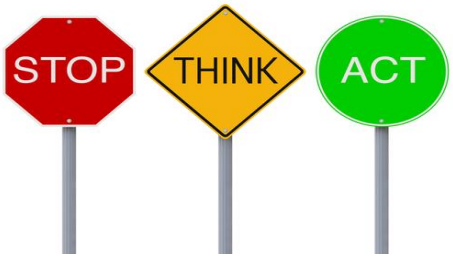
Just a few reasons:

- Protect the health and safety of you, your family, and the public
- Protect future owners who deserve reasonable assurance that the home or structure they occupy is safe
- Protect from unlicensed contractors, or those who'd practice bad business in the community
- Ensure the community's welfare and economic wellbeing by reducing the potential spread of fire, disease, structural fails, and mitigate emergency/disaster potential
- Maintain uniform building practices and help keep building costs down
- Assure safety, quality of life, and enhancement of the community as a whole
- Regulate Federal and State energy conservation requirements

Q.) WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION ON CODES AND CONSTRUCTION?

The Building Handouts page of the Mounds View website has many handouts that address common building projects. The Mounds View Community Development Department can always be contacted for assistance and to answer any questions. A lot of the current MN Residential Code information can be found on the MN Dept of Labor's website, or the International Code Council's website.

Safetymatters



Please work safely, wear proper protective equipment, and always be aware of your surroundings and others!



Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms regularly, and practice fire prevention and escape plans with your family.







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