



District of Kitimat

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# Building Permits

## A Homeowner's Guide

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This guide is prepared to help you "get through" the process and provides you with references, resources and procedures explaining where to go if you need help.

It is meant for guidance purposes only and should not be construed as a right to permit approval.

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## What is A Building Permit?

A building permit is your approval to begin construction. It means that the plans you have submitted for your new building, addition or alteration have been accepted by the Municipal Building Inspector and comply with the *B.C. Building Code* and *Kitimat Municipal Code Zoning Regulations*. There are other provincial authorities such as the Public Health Officer, Gas Inspector and the Electrical Safety Inspector who also may be involved with your construction.

## Why are Building Permits Necessary?

Your municipality regulates development by the use of building permits to meet goals and objectives that reflect the social, economic, health, safety and environmental needs of the community. Building permits ensure that building standards are met and construction in our community meets a safe and proper standard. This process, properly performed, protects the individual's interests and safeguards public health and safety in every building that will serve the community, and underscores the need for a modern Building Code.

## When Do I Need a Permit?

### **You will require permits before starting construction if you plan to:**

- Construct a new building or structure on your property, including a fence, deck, shed or underground pool;
- Make material alterations, additions or repairs to a building;
- Excavate or construct a foundation;
- Install heating, ventilating, air conditioning, fireplace or solid fuel burning appliance;
- Do plumbing inside or outside of a residence, including yard piping and basement plumbing improvements, a hot tub or similar plumbing fixtures;
- Locate a temporary building, mobile home or pre-built structure;
- Renovate or convert an existing building;
- Finish a basement;
- Demolish an existing building or part;
- Move a building from one location to another;
- Construct a driveway.

When considering any kind of construction on your property, your local building official will be pleased to discuss your plans and advise you about permits or other approvals that you might need. Call the Municipal Offices at 250-632-8900 and the Building Department will provide answers to any questions over the telephone or an inspector may visit your premises to advise you about what is required.

## How Do I Obtain a Building Permit?

Applications for building permits are available from the Receptionist at the District of Kitimat Municipal Offices, 270 City Centre, in the City Centre Mall, or online at <http://www.kitimat.ca>. You will need to submit two copies of your building drawings or other plans and documents for processing. Plans must be drawn to scale and indicate clearly the extent and nature of your project. The Building Department can provide a guideline and excerpts from the *Kitimat Municipal Code* for you to follow and, in some cases, guides and examples of acceptable drawings.

Applications for simple alterations can be dealt with fairly quickly, while more complex proposals take longer to process. Any changes such as zoning, minor variance approval or building plan alterations must be approved and in place before a building permit can be issued.

For certain work—for example, where the technical detail required exceeds the information provided in *the B.C. Building Code*—the Building Inspector may ask you to obtain the services of a professional engineer, architect or land surveyor.

You will be required to pay fees for a building permit, plan examination, plumbing permit, sewer and water hook-up (if required) when you receive your building permit.

A water turn-on fee will be required before the municipal works crews will turn on the water supply.

## How Can I Resolve a Problem?

If there are problems with your proposal, the Municipal Building Inspector will discuss them with you in detail.

If you are refused a building permit, the Building Inspector will advise you of the reasons why in writing. If you cannot resolve the problem, you may wish to obtain resolution by one of the following options.

1. If you feel the Building Official is misinterpreting the application of technical content of the Building Code, (a) you may appeal to the Building Code Appeal Board, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C., V8W 3E1 (b) request an opinion from the Building Standards Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
2. If zoning or development regulations are the reason for refusal, you may apply to the District of Kitimat Planning Department to amend zoning or development regulations.
3. If the reason for refusal does not relate to 1. or 2. above, you may contact the Municipal Manager and subsequently Council. You will be advised as to whether Council has any authority over the matter with which you are concerned.

## What Inspections are Required?

Your building permit lists every required inspection and gives you information about the inspections you will need. The Building Inspector will need 24 hours' notice to ensure that the inspection can be handled. An appointment may be booked up to 4:00 p.m. on the day before the required inspection. You cannot book inspections until you have obtained your permit. Please telephone the District of Kitimat Reception desk at 250-632-8900 to make your inspection appointment.

As a general rule, any work that will be covered up by the next stage of work will need an inspection before being covered up. Examples include footings, underground services, framing, plumbing, etc. Once the inspector is reasonably certain that you are proceeding correctly, he will probably give you permission to continue the work to the next stage. All work should be substantially complete before you request an inspection, as re-inspection fees must be paid when work is incomplete, faulty or covered up without inspections.

It is extremely important that all inspections are done, as any missed inspections will inevitably cause delays, or additional expenses and work. Sometimes, although infrequently, missed inspections may cause you to incur legal expenses.

Final inspection is very important for you to obtain an Occupancy Permit. You are legally required to obtain an occupancy permit prior to moving in to your new or renovated home.

## What are My Responsibilities?

Every property owner or his authorized agent is responsible to ensure that all inspections are requested in the above manner. Building Inspectors will only make a required inspection with a booked appointment.

In addition to your co-operation with any inspections, you must:

- Post your building permit in a visible location;
- Keep a copy of the approved plans on the site; and
- Bring any proposed changes to the attention of the Building Inspector so they may be approved in the same manner as the original plans.

## How Can I Find Out More?

Our receptionists will be pleased to help you, or to direct your inquiry to the proper person or department.

More detailed information is available through your Municipal Building Department, Planning Department and Engineering Department at 270 City Centre, Kitimat, telephone 250-632-8900.