

FAQ Details

FAQ - Permitting Category

Q: I have a farming operation am I exempt from Permitting?

A: You may be exempt from some state and local regulations. If you are not agricultural exempt according to the Property Appraiser the Development Review Specialist in the Building Division to start the process. If you are green belted or agricultural exempt according to the Appraiser you will need to see a Permit Tech to start the process, then you will need to see a Plans Examiner and the Fire Marshal possible life safety issue.

Although bonafide non-residential agricultural structures are not required to comply with the building codes, a Tracking Document is used for fire code enforcement, and State & Federal regulations. If the electric power provider requires a power release from Polk County an Electrical Permit will be required.

Q: What work does and does not require a permit?

A: Section 105.1 of the Florida Building Code states that a permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or occupancy or occupant content of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the technical codes.

Work that requires an inspection to verify compliance with the applicable technical code requires a construction permit.

Separate electrical, mechanical or plumbing permits may be required even if a building permit is not required. Following are examples of work that does and does not require a permit. These examples are not all inclusive, and there will be situations that are not addressed here. In question as to permit requirements, call our Bartow office at 863-534-6080 and ask to speak with a plans examiner.

Work Requiring a Construction Permit

Construction or demolition of any building or structure, regardless of size.

All new construction, including additions, and any alterations, renovations or remodels involving structural elements or involving any plumbing, fuel gas, fire systems, pollutant storage tanks, on-site underground utilities, signs or mechanical systems.

Alterations, renovations, remodels or modifications to any commercial structure affecting occupancy classification, means of egress ratings or handicap accessibility.

The installation, alteration, replacement, extension, or repair of any irrigation, electrical, plumbing, mechanical work, fuel gas, fire systems or any associated electrical work (low voltage). Including the change out of A/C equipment, electrical service changes, or electrical outlets or circuits.

Conversion of any non-habitable space to habitable space including the enclosure of garages, carports, porches or similar structures replacement of screening or vinyl windows with glass or solid walls.

Screening of any space, which requires structural or infill framing to be added.

All foundation remediation work to assure that an engineer is overseeing the work.

Any change in occupancy as defined by the building code.

Commercial and residential docks, piers, sea walls, boathouses, bulkheads and boat ramps.

All masonry walls and fences with masonry pilasters. All solid fences over eight feet high.

Retaining walls required for structural support, protection, or erosion.

Decorative retaining walls. Call 863-534-6080 and ask for a Plans Examiner for information.

Concrete slabs adjacent to a principal or accessory structure, intended for support of a structure, elevated slabs, sidewalks, and porches in the right of way or within the minimum setbacks. Note: All slabs shall meet minimum setbacks from property lines and easements and driveways. Building Code and Land Development Code (LDC) drainage requirements shall be met.

Pavers installed within the required setbacks or adjacent to structures. Note: Shall meet Building Code and LDC Requirements

Tents 201 square feet or larger for public assembly or use, or having electrical lighting

Pre-manufactured storage buildings.

Additions, repairs, alterations, or accessory structures to mobile homes or park trailers. Owners of a mobile home or park trailer site will not be able to permit additions as owner builders without notarized landowner consent.

Mobile home and park trailer set-ups. Owners of a mobile home or park trailer situated on a rented lot will not be able to permit additions as owner builders without notarized landowner consent.

In ground swimming pools and spas. Above ground swimming pools and spas more than 24" deep.

Pool/spa repairs, renovations, demolitions and remodels involving structural elements, electrical, gas, solar, geothermal work or accessories.

All re-roofing, including mobile homes and park trailers, and including installation of insulated roof coverings.

Decks, walkways, platforms, stairs and landings. All shall meet setbacks and shall not encroach in easements.

All carports or similar structures with rigid roofs.

All flagpole foundations and poles greater than 50 feet high.

Replacement of skylights, windows, and doors, including garage doors.

Installation or replacement of vinyl or acrylic windows.

Plumbing re-pipes and water heater change outs.

Installation or replacement of security bars or permanently installed window and door shutters.

Siding and soffit replacement or installation

Handicap ramps require a permit and must meet setbacks

Tree Houses require a permit with sealed engineered plans. Exception: Residential Tree Houses that meet the following criteria:

- 1) Tree Houses with maximum floor area of 32 square feet.
- 2) May have up to a 30 inch knee wall.
- 3) Shall meet minimum LDC Accessory Structure setback requirements.

- 4) Shall be totally supported by tree.
- 5) Shall have no electrical or plumbing.
- 6) Shall have no roof.
- 7) Maximum of one (1) tree house per residential lot.

Work Not Requiring A Construction Permit

Minor roof repairs - less than 25 square feet.

Replacement of screening with like material in an existing structure.

Interior remodels, interior renovations, or interior repairs on ANSI units or RVs.

Minor electrical, plumbing, mechanical repairs only, no extensions or modifications

Chain link fences of any height and stockade fences up to eight feet high. Check Polk County Land Development Code for prohibited fencing.

Structures intended for storage use only (prefabricated and of a "Closet" use). You may "reach in" only, not "walk-in." These exempt limited to a maximum 5 ft. height (mean height), 50 sq. ft. maximum area, and a maximum 250 cubic ft. with no electrical or plum

Q: How long is a permit valid and how can they be extended or renewed?

A: Section 104.5 of the building code states that work must start within six months of permit issue and the job must have received inspection in the last 180 days for the permit to remain valid.

A permit may be extended for up to 180 days by requesting an extension prior to the expiration date. The request must be in written cause.

Permits which have been expired for 90 days or less can be renewed by requesting renewal, in writing, and giving justifiable cause. provided for in the County user fee manual will be charged.

Permits which have been expired from 91 to 180 days can be renewed by requesting renewal, in writing, and giving justifiable cause construction permit fees, as paid at original permit issue, will be charged. This is to include building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical irrigation and mobile home set up permit fees.

Permits expired for over 180 days cannot be renewed. A new permit application, payment of all permit fees and compliance with all regulations will be required.

A backlog of expired permits may result in suspension of permitting privileges until they have been re-opened and final inspections

Q: What is the status of my permit?

A: To view the status of a permit at any time, please visit our "[Project/Permit and Contractor License Status Viewer](#)" go to <http://polkcounty.net/> once there click on the "Permit Information" link.

Q: What do I need to pull a Mobile Home Set Up permit?

A: Homeowners can no longer pull Owner Permits for Mobile Home Setups. (Florida Statutes 320.8249) Licensed Mobile Home Installer all Mobile Home Setup Applications as of 09/01/00.

If the mobile home you are trying to obtain a permit for is more than 3 years old, you must apply for a Mobile Home Pre-Inspection approval before the mobile home setup permit can be issued.

You must show proof of: A current Florida registration for the mobile home in your name or, provide a notarized copy of the mobile license.

If the mobile home is or will be on a septic system (new or existing), you must bring your original septic tank permit or approval for request.

You must show proof of the legal description/parcel ID for your property. If you do not have your legal description/parcel ID, you can visit the property appraiser's website (www.polkpa.org) or contact them at 863-534-4777. You must also provide the name of the County appraiser who gives access to the property.

You must list all of your contractors, and they must be registered with Polk County. Owners can do their own electrical, mechanical setup of the mobile home must be done by a licensed mobile home installer. The setup inspection will not be approved and the power released of the installer decal does not appear on the home.

You need to know the MAKE, YEAR AND SIZE of the mobile home.

If the mobile home is on County water and/or sewer, the tap receipt must accompany the setup application.

If the mobile home is located in a flood area, a Flood Elevation Certificate must be completed by a Florida Registered Engineer or Licensed Professional Engineer at the mobile home setup inspection and power release.

A Blocking Plan must be submitted with the mobile home setup application; this can be obtained from the mobile home installer.

A Skirting Affidavit must accompany all applications. (If owner is doing skirting a separate permit is required.)

Effective 12/01/2002; a RECORDED Notice of Commencement will be required in order to issue the mobile home setup permit.

Please contact SWFTMD for well permits at 863-534-1448.

Please contact the Health Department for septic permits: Bartow Health Dept. (Main Office/Comm. Projects) 863-519-8330 - Bartow Health Dept. (Admin. Building) 863-534-5944 - Winter Haven Health Dept. (Gill Jones Plaza) 863-298-4566

Q. How do I obtain a fire alarm permit?

A: Minimum Plan Requirements - Fire Alarm Systems

A. Minimum Plan Requirements - Fire Alarm Systems

When a fire detection and alarm system is required, the guidelines for planning and testing a new fire alarm system as well as the systems acceptance are delineated.

Plans Submission

Three (3) sets of workshop drawings shall be submitted and approved by the prior to installation. System plans shall be at least 24" x 36" drawings and shall indicate the following:

- Name and address of building/project/tenant.
- Name of contractor with address, phone number and certification/ license number.
- Floor plan with dimensions to scale identifying the use of all rooms and spaces.
- Symbol list and equipment identification (flow, bell, horns, pull, etc.).
- Manufacturer specifications and UL listing number for all devices and equipment to be installed. Battery and voltage drop calculation.
- Location of zones and a fire alarm riser diagram.
- Compliance with State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-48 FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS and applicable NFPA standards.
- Location of all devices.
- Engineer's seal is required on plans for a job value that exceeds \$5000.00.

Pre-Acceptance Testing

When calling the automated inspection phone line, enter inspection code 820 for an alarm test final.

Alarm contractor shall do a complete test of system before a fire inspector is called for the acceptance test. The fire alarm record 48 should be affixed to the panel and the inspection & testing form required by NFPA # 72 should be completed.

Approved plans shall be on site at time of alarm testing and final.

Alarm contractor shall provide sufficient personnel to properly conduct system test.

Alarm contractor or owner shall arrange for a monitoring agreement with a listed central station (if required). A copy of this agreement provided to the fire inspector at time of system test.

Alarm contractor shall notify all parties concerned regarding the test. (A.H.J., occupants of building, security, central station, etc.) central stations are the only approved monitoring stations.

In some cases a sound meter with the A-weighted, B-weighted, and C-weighted measurement will be required to measure the aud

Q. How do I obtain a fire sprinkler permit?**A. Minimum Plan Requirements - Fire Sprinkler Systems**

A fire sprinkler system is an integrated system of underground and overhead piping designed in accordance with fire protection engineering. The installation includes one or more automatic water supplies.

Plans Submission

Three (3) sets of workshop drawings shall be submitted and approved by the prior to installation.

Compliance with State Fire Marshal Rule 69A-49 and applicable NFPA standards.

System drawings/working plans shall indicate the following:

Working plans shall be drawn to an indicated scale, on sheets of uniform size, with a plan of each floor, and shall show all those items.

The working plan submittal shall include the manufacturer's installation instructions for any specially listed equipment, including device applications, and limitations for any sprinklers, devices, piping, or fittings.

Engineer's seal is required on plans for a job with more than 49 sprinklers.

Note: A separate permit is required for underground fire mains, private hydrants and water storage tanks for fire protection.

Acceptance Testing

When calling the automated inspection phone line, please enter inspection code 811 for an above ground pressure test and an 812 for underground fire main rough (visual only) the code is 801 and 810 for a pressure test.

Complete and sign the appropriate contractor's material and test certificate(s)

Sprinkler contractor shall notify all parties concerned regarding the test. (A.H.J., occupants of building, security, central station, etc.) The acceptance test shall include all of the provisions of NFPA 13 & 24. Acceptance tests including but not limited to the requirements for piping, hydrostatic testing and permissible leakage limits.

Approved plans shall be on site at time of pressure tests and inspections.

Q: Must I provide engineering for a permit to build a storage building accessory to my single family residence?

A: No, if you are going to build it yourself, as an owner/builder, we have engineered master plans for storage buildings in varying sizes and types that we will provide to you at no charge. Changes to the plans will not be accepted and you must personally appear to pull the permit as owner/builder. If you have any questions, call 534-6080 and ask to speak to a plans examiner.

O: Where do I obtain residential driveway permit?

A: A residential driveway permit is processed at the Building Inspections Division. For more information, call 863-534-6080.

Q: Where do I obtain a non-residential driveway permit?

A: Access permit or non-residential driveway permits are processed in accordance with the [Land Development Code](#) (LDC, Ordinance 2008-10). The Land Development Division provides technical review of the construction plans. For more information on permitting process under the LDC, call the Land Development Division, at 863-534-6792.

Q. What is a Fire Marshal permit?

A. Most work that requires a building permit also requires a fire permit such as construction of a building or addition and renovation of a structure including a change of occupancy to a building.

To install, modify, and remove fire protection systems such as:

Fire alarm systems

Water-based automatic suppression systems

Underground mains serving hydrants and/or automatic fire sprinklers

Fire pumps, standpipe systems & water storage tanks for fire protection

Chemical and gaseous agent extinguishing systems

Also:

Installation or removal of aboveground and underground tanks used for flammable or combustible liquid.

Tents and canopies over 200 square feet

Sale of Sparklers Outdoor display of fireworks Indoor display of pyrotechnics LP gas installations

Q. How do I obtain a fireworks permit?

A. Have the licensed Pyrotechnics contractor (that you are hiring to shoot the display) call the Polk County Fire Marshal. They can supply them with the proper application/paperwork for them to complete. There is a permit fee of \$100.00 (the time the permit application is filed). Approval by the [Polk County Sheriff's Office](#) is to be submitted to the Polk County Office. Approval from the Polk County Fire Marshal's Office includes: proper insurance coverage of at least \$1,000,000; a written agreement in favor of Polk County and a site plan to be submitted with the application. All requirements in 11-791, NFPA 1123 Code for Fireworks Display and/or NFPA 1126 Standard for the Use of Pyrotechnics Before a Proximate Structure be strictly adhered to. Permits will be revoked if state laws and ordinances of Polk County are not followed.

Please check with the Building Division Development Review Specialist at 863-534-6461 or the Planner on Call at 863-534-6084 to see if a Temporary Use Permit will be required.

For all other questions please contact the Growth Management Customer Service Area by [email](#), phone (863-534-6084); or fax (863-534-6084) hours are Monday-Friday between 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (excluding holidays).