

# P PERMITS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Q: Who can apply for a permit?

**Building** - A licensed contractor or owner of a single-family owner-occupied home.

**Mechanical** - A license master mechanical contractor, or owner of a single-family owner-occupied home.

**Electrical** - An "A" license electrician or owner of a single-family owner-occupied home.

**Plumbing** - A licensed master plumber or owner of a single-family owner-occupied home.

## Q: What work can be done without permit?

### Building

- One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area is not greater than 120 square feet.
- Fences not over 7 feet high
- Oil derricks
- Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II, IIIA liquids.
- Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2:1.
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
- Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
- Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.

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## Electrical

- **Repairs and maintenance:** Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
- **Radio and television transmitting stations:** The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions; but do apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installations of towers and antennas.
- **Temporary testing systems:** A permit shall not be required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

## Gas

- Portable heating appliance.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.

## Mechanical

- Portable heating appliance.
- Portable ventilation equipment.
- Portable cooling unit.
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
- Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
- Portable evaporative cooler.
- Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.

## Plumbing

- The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
- The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.



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## **Q: Can I do work myself or do I have to hire a contractor?**

- An owner occupied of a single-family home can do the work him or herself.
- If the property is not owner occupied, need to hire a license contractor.
- For two family or more or commercial need to hire a license contractor.

## **Q: How long does a permit last?**

A permit expires after six months if no work is being done or no inspections have been conducted.

## **Q: Why can't I find the address?**

- The property may be on a corner lot and it might have two addresses
- The property has multiple numbers, the work may be going on one of the numbers, not the main address.

## **Q: What is the permit process for Building, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing?**

You can apply online at [www.providenceri.gov/inspection-standards](http://www.providenceri.gov/inspection-standards) or at 444 Westminster Street. Applications require:

- Name of the owner
- Name of contractor and license number
- Complete description of work
- Labor & material cost of work that is being done, does not matter if owner is supplying the material.
- Plans (if required provide electronic submittal and one hard copy)

After the application is reviewed and confirmed and permit is paid, call for inspections (please allow 24hrs for inspection to be performed).

After work is done, contractor needs to call to schedule a final inspection.

If plans were required, the contractor needs to have the approved stamped plan from the plan-reviewer at the inspection site the day of inspection.

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## Q: Can the owner change the contractor after a permit has been pulled?

Yes, you need to provide an owner dismissal of contractor form.

## Q: Can a contractor take his name off a permit?

Yes, you need to provide a contractor terminating permit form.

## Q: What is the process to change the contractor?

The new contractor shall take responsibility of the entire project whether an inspection was done or not. Work can be added to the existing work, cost may increase and the difference will need to be paid prior to the change being approved.

## Q: How is the permit fee calculated?

Permit fees are calculated by cost of construction for labor and materials x a multiplier. The City has a permit fee calculator on the Department of Inspections and Standards web page [www.providenceri.gov/inspection/permit-fee-calculator](http://www.providenceri.gov/inspection/permit-fee-calculator) that can help customers determine their permit fee ahead of time to assist with budgeting purposes.

The City’s building permit fee is represented in the table below. These fees were set by the State of Rhode Island in July of 2018.

<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>\$23.00 per thousand of cost (minimum = \$50.00)</b>
<b>\$10,000.01</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$230.00 + \$21.00 per thousand exceeding \$10,000.00</b>
<b>More Than \$50,000.01</b>		<b>\$1070.00 + \$19.00 per thousand exceeding \$50,000.00</b>

The department will always double check the permit fee associated with your project by comparing our in-house construction cost estimate to the cost provided by you or your contractor to prevent the undervaluation of projects.

We estimate the construction cost of any project by the scope of work and a cost per square foot multiplier. The multiplier is listed on the Building Valuation Data table provided by the International Code Council. This table is an average cost per square foot. [www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/code-development-process/building-valuation-data/](http://www.iccsafe.org/products-and-services/i-codes/code-development-process/building-valuation-data/)

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We use this as our baseline and expect our project cost and your project cost to be within 1% of each other. If there is a discrepancy in your stated construction cost, that is much different than our in-house construction cost estimate, you may be asked to provide additional information on your cost estimate.

## **Q: How far in advance do I need to call for an inspection?**

24 hours in advance and a second call the day of the inspection to confirm.

### **Required Inspections**

#### **Buildings**

1. Excavation
2. Footings
3. Foundation
4. As-Built for Foundation (submitted Prior to starting framing)
5. Rough Frame (Three Requirements)
  - a. Rough Electrical Signoff
  - b. Rough Plumbing Signoff
  - c. Gas Signoff
6. Insulation
7. Mechanical
  - a. Rough
  - b. Above Ceiling
  - c. Final
8. Final (Seven Requirements)
  - a. Final Electrical Signoff
  - b. Final Gas Signoff
  - c. Final Plumbing Signoff
  - d. Fire Department Signoff (Commercial Sprinkler/Fire Alarm)
  - e. Final Mechanical Signoff
  - f. Assessor
  - g. Final Building Signoff

#### **Electrical**

1. Underground
2. Rough
3. Final

#### **Gas**

1. Underground
2. Rough
3. Final

#### **Plumbing**

1. Underground
2. Rough
3. Final

#### **Testing**

1. Mechanical
2. Fire Alarm / Sprinkler

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**Footing and foundation inspection** - Footing and foundation inspections shall be made after excavations for footings are complete and any required reinforcing steel is in place. For concrete foundations, any required forms shall be in place prior to inspection. Materials for the foundation shall be on the job, except where concrete is ready mixed in accordance with ASTM C94, the concrete need not be on the job.

**Concrete slab and under-floor inspection** - Concrete slab and under-floor inspections shall be made after in-slab or under-floor reinforcing steel and building service equipment, conduit, piping accessories and other ancillary equipment items are in place, but before any concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed, including the subfloor.

**Lowest floor elevation** - In flood hazard areas, upon placement of the lowest floor, including the basement, and prior to further vertical construction, the elevation certification required in Section 1612.5 shall be submitted to the building official.

**Lath, gypsum board and gypsum panel product inspection** - Lath, gypsum board and gypsum panel product inspections shall be made after lathing, gypsum board and gypsum panel products, interior and exterior, are in place, but before any plastering is applied or gypsum board and gypsum panel product joints and fasteners are taped and finished.

**Exception** - Gypsum board and gypsum panel products that are not part of a fire- resistance-rated assembly or a shear assembly.

**Fire and smoke-resistant penetrations** - Protection of joints and penetrations in fire-resistance-rated assemblies, smoke barriers and smoke partitions shall not be concealed from view until inspected and approved.

**Energy efficiency inspections** - Inspections shall be made to determine compliance with International Energy Conservation Code with R.I. amendments and shall include, but not be limited to, inspections for: envelope insulation R- and U-values, fenestration U-value, duct system R-value, and HV AC and water-heating equipment efficiency.

**Other inspections** - In addition to the above inspections the building official is authorized to make or require other inspections of any construction work to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this code and other laws that are enforced by the department of building safety.

**Final inspection** - The final inspection shall be made after all work required by the building permit is completed.

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## **Q: What are the requirements for Certificate of Occupancy?**

- All Architects' and Engineers' Close Out Documents Field Reports
- All Testing Reports
- Final Architectural and Engineering Affidavits
- Final Signoffs on Building Permit
- As-built
- Occupant Load
- Designed Dead Loads
- Type of Construction
- Use Group

## **Q: How long does the permit review process take?**

Starts within 15 days of submittal, typical review takes between 5 to 15 days or may be longer depending on the project and if additional information is required.

## **Q: What do I need to apply for a raze building permit?**

- Providence Fire Department for 4 or more family dwellings and all commercial properties
- Certificate of Liability insurance with Coinsurance
- Performance bond
- Clear boarding liens
- Use of Public Fund Declaration
- Dig Safe file Number (1-800-344-7233)
- Statement regarding absence or abatement of asbestos with Plan Number
- Statement regarding pest control
- Providence Water Supply Board
- National Grid Gas Company
- National Grid Electric Company
- Verizon Telephone Company
- Cox Cable
- PHDC approval in historic district (if applicable)
- DDRC, CCC approval in Down City jurisdiction (if applicable)

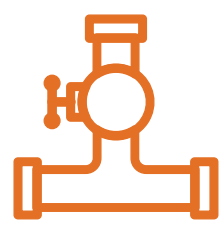
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## Q: What do I need to apply for a raze garage/shed permit?

- Pest Control Abatement / statement Regarding Pest control
- Electrical Inspection by DIS Electrical Division
- Historical Approval Letter (if applicable)

## Q: How do I request an extension for a permit?

An extension can be requested by email or by viewpoint.



## ABOUT US

The Department of Inspection and Standards' mission is to promote public safety and to be part of the economic development of Providence.

We have a professional staff to assist constituents through our building permitting process, building code changes, city ordinances and zoning requirements, from small renovations to complex real estate projects. We are tasked with day-to-day code enforcement, as well as responding to emergency cases like fires, accidents, and unsafe and dangerous structures. Our staff also responds to complaints from constituents to investigate potential violations, and well as unsafe conditions.

Our office is located on the first floor of 444 Westminster Street, please come by to apply for a building permit, or with any property questions or concerns you may have. We are ready to assist you!