



City of Houston Building Code Enforcement TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PERMITTING

1. **Permits.** Most projects require a permit. Any alteration, repair, remodel, renovation, or new construction in both residential and commercial buildings requires permits. Any work done to repair, replace, alter or install mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment also requires a permit, but if no plans are involved these single trade permits may be obtained online.
2. **Permit Exemptions.** Some examples of the items exempt from a permit are:
 - a. Painting, carpet, tile and wood flooring
 - b. Interior trim and similar finish work
 - c. Wood or metal fences up to 8 feet tall
 - d. Residential storage sheds less than 200 square feet
 - e. Uncovered decks up to 30 inches above the ground
3. **Deed Restrictions.** The City of Houston Legal Department enforces certain deed restriction items. Confirm whether your property has deed restrictions before you build in order to ensure that your project will conform. You may contact the Harris County Deed Records at 713-755-6405.
4. **Licensed Trades.** Permits for the structural portion of the work can be purchased by anyone; however, in general, mechanical, electrical and plumbing work must be permitted and performed by a licensed person.
5. **Certificate of Occupancy.** All commercial buildings require a Certificate of Occupancy to show conformance with the local building codes. The Certificate of Occupancy can either be issued after the completion of new construction or on an existing building, following inspection by the Occupancy Inspection team.
6. **Exits.** Many code items could save your life. Bedroom windows must be the correct size to ensure that in the event of a fire, you can get out and the Fire Fighters can get in. In commercial buildings, we ensure appropriate size and spacing of doors and hallways to allow exiting for the number of people in the building.
7. **Inspections.** All requests for construction inspections are completed the next business day following the request.
8. **Energy Code.** The State of Texas has an Energy Code which places restrictions on the building components to reduce the overall energy consumption of the building. Items affected by this code are windows, wall ceiling insulation, air-conditioning equipment and ducts. If you plan on remodeling or repairing, ensure that your project conforms to this code.
9. **Trees and Other Landscaping.** Trees are protected by the City of Houston. Trees within the building setback line may not be cut down or destroyed. Required landscaping that has been provided in parking lots and on new building sites are required to be maintained for a year by City Ordinance.
10. **Architects and Engineers.** The State Board of Architectural Examiners and the State Board of Professional Engineers require that some buildings and structures be designed by a registered design professional, but not every project does. To confirm whether a registered design professional is required for a specific project please contact <http://www.tbae.state.tx.us/> or <http://www.tbpe.state.tx.us/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Adopted Codes. 2012 International Building Code, 2012 International Residential Code, 2014 National Electrical Code, 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code, 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code, 2012 International Fire Code

Who to Call. Non permitted construction activity can result in the issuance of citations, so if you are not sure if a permit is required, or what code is to be followed, please call us. We are here to help. You can contact the Customer Assistance & Code Development Office at 832-394-9494.

Web Resources. The City of Houston has many online resources to take advantage of. The following are just a few:

- www.houstontx.gov (Home Page)
- www.houstonpermittingcenter.org (Permit Website)
- www.houstontx.gov/311 (General Information)
- www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/building-code-enforcement.html (Building Code Enforcement)