

Most Frequently Asked Questions About Residential Building Projects

What do I have to pull a permit for?

Building

Any new structures, such as a home, addition, garage, shed, deck, or any structural changes.

Any change of current use of area within a home would require permits (e.g. finishing a basement to provide habitable space, creating a bedroom from an existing space).

Roof replacement

Siding

Window & exterior door replacement

Pools

Non-structural repairs and renovations within a home, or replacement of existing fixtures do not require a permit. (Replacement of cabinets, counters, flooring, painting, awnings/shutters attached to the home)

Plumbing/Mechanical

Furnace replacement

Installing air conditioning

Water heater replacement

Gas piping

Irrigation systems

Repair water/sewer lines

Installation of new plumbing or fixtures

Electrical

Permits are required for all electrical work with the exception of, replacement of fixtures, switches and outlets.

Brownstown Township strongly recommends that, State of Michigan licensed electrical contractors perform electrical installation and repairs.

Permits are issued only to licensed Electrical Contractors, and Homeowners, for the dwelling in which they reside, or intend to reside (new home). Homeowner Permits, will not be issued to owners of rental properties.

What do I need a Zoning Permit for?

Fences

Exterior Concrete

Sheds

How deep do footings have to be?

42" for a house, deck, attached garage or detached garage/utility structure over 400 square feet.

What are basic deck requirements?

1. Footings 42" deep (undisturbed soil), treated material or naturally weather resistant woods must be used (pressure treated lumber, cedar, or plastic composite are all acceptable materials). The deck is to support 60 lb. live load.
2. Railings are to be 3 ft. high min. and able to support 200 lbs. of pressure in any direction. Spindles are required if the deck or stairs are 30" above the finish grade. Spindle spacing should be such that a 4-in. sphere cannot pass through openings.
3. Stairways are to be 3-ft. wide min. with a graspable handrail no more than 2 5/8 inches wide, located between 34"-38" in height, measured plumb from the leading edge of each tread.
4. Stair tread height must be a maximum of 8 1/4" and 4" minimum. Stair tread depth must be 9" minimum. Steps cannot vary more than 3/8" in the "run" of the stairs.
5. Decks constructed on new homes where posts would be located in a "disturbed soil area" must be attached to the home. Typically, 30" or so around your foundation has been "over-dug", obviously this area is "settling" fill material and in most cases, will not support your deck adequately. All foundations must be placed upon undisturbed load bearing soil.

What is the maximum number of roof coverings that I can place on my house before completely tearing off the roof to the existing boards?

Only two roofs can be placed on a house before complete replacement.

What is meant by a 'Change of Use'?

An example of this would be changing a residence into an office, daycare, or Assembly Use. In this example, some obvious differences in the possible dangers or liabilities might take place that would be different from a residential use. Zoning would have to allow for this new type of 'Use change'. A new Certificate of Occupancy is required for any change of Use. Inspectors of all trades must conduct inspections and compliance with current code for the new intended Use must be met before C of O could be issued.

What do I have to turn in for a building permit?

Four sets of building plans

A plot plan (showing to scale the dimension of lot, location and accurate size of all existing structures, location and size of proposed structure)

Copy of builder's license

Copy of Signed Contract

Insurance

Homeowner's affidavit (if pulling own permit);

Completed permit application.

What specific items should be included on a set of building plans?

Aside from an accurate site plan, all plans should include the following when applicable:

1. Footings or foundation type and size,
2. Front, rear, and side elevations (views), of the proposed building, with accurate elevations.
3. A complete floor plan, which indicates accurate dimension of room sizes, use of space, header, window, and door sizes.
4. A wall sectional that identifies the stud spacing, insulation type, interior finish, joist spacing and type of flooring, all structural supports, Complete specifications for pre-engineered trusses, and all other engineered wood products (I-joist, LVL, and Glue lam)

Is it the building department's obligation to help design my plans?

No. It is the building department's job to check for zoning and code compliance. Any questions regarding design or any assistance needed in producing a drawing for review should be referred to an architect or registered design professional.

What kinds of inspections are generally required on a typical new home in Brownstown Township?

Inspections are required for water/sewer installation, footings, backfill (before it is backfilled), underground plumbing, rough plumbing, rough electric, rough heating, fireplace, rough frame and exterior rough (together or separate), insulation, drywall, Interior slabs and porches attached to the foundation, final plumbing, final electric, final heating, smoke detectors, and final building.

Inspections for plumbing, mechanical, and electrical must be inspected and approved before inspection for rough/final building can be conducted.

What construction code is being used in Brownstown Township?

Currently the Township is enforcing The Michigan Building Code 2003, The Michigan Residential Code 2003, Michigan Plumbing Code, Michigan Mechanical Code, The N.E.C 2002, International Property Maintenance Code 1996, and Township Ordinances.

Moving A Home?

Any structure intended to be moved into the Township would first have to be inspected. A moved structure must comply with all current codes.

Demolition Permit?

Any application for a demolition permit should include a notice of disconnect from all utilities. (Electrical, water, gas)

Things All Residents Should Know

It is our intention at the Brownstown Township Building Department to assist in completing all building projects as smooth as possible for you, the resident. Our goal is to insure that your project meets code standards for health, safety, and welfare, for yourself as well as the general public.

Protect Yourself!

When contracting work to be done to your home...

1. Always, hire a State of Michigan licensed contractor, licensed in the trade in which they are doing work.
2. Always, have your contractor pull permits (If you, the homeowner, pull the permit and fill out the "Homeowner Affidavit", you, the homeowner are responsible for the work)
3. Always, make sure that your contractor shows you the copy of the permit, and displays it in visible location.