

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The following is a list of questions commonly asked regarding the permit process. All answers are for the City of Pensacola only. To make sure your project will need to meet these requirements, please first verify your jurisdiction using the Escambia County [Property Appraiser website](#).

### **What is exempt from a permit?**

In accordance with Chapter 1 of the Florida Building Code and our [Permit Exemptions Policy](#), the following items are exempt from permitting:

- Children's playhouses less than 120 square feet
- Floor coverings such as tile or carpet
- HVAC unit repairs
- Minor cabinetry which does not include any electrical or plumbing fixtures
- Minor drywall repairs
- Painting
- Portable heating or cooling appliances
- Roofing repairs under 100 square feet
- Siding repairs under 100 square feet
- Other minor home repairs as deemed exempt by the Building Official

### **When do I need an alteration permit?**

Alteration Permits are required for kitchen and bathroom remodels in which all cabinets and plumbing, gas, and/or electrical fixtures are being removed. Alteration Permits are also required if the sheetrock will be removed to rough in subtrades or walls will be added or removed.

### **Do I need a permit for a fence?**

The City of Pensacola issues permits for fencing to ensure it meets zoning requirements. Fence permits are \$35. With your application, we require a site plan showing where the fence is going to be in relation to the property lines, as well as the height of the fence. To learn the setbacks for a property, please contact our [Planning Department](#).

### **Do I need a permit to remove a tree from my property?**

Tree removal permits may be required depending on the type and size of tree to be removed. As of 2022, all tree removal requests will be handled by the city arborist.

### **Can I pull a permit as the property owner?**

Per Florida State Statutes [Chapter 489.103](#), owners may pull permits for their project so long as they meet the following requirements:

For residential properties (one- and two-family buildings or outbuildings), you must intend to use the property as your personal residence for at least 1 year after completion of your project. You may not build or alter such residence for sale or lease.

For commercial properties which are for your personal business use only and are not for sale or lease, you may pull permits as the business owner on projects up to \$75,000 in cost. However, the building must be owned in your name. An LLC is not accepted as an owner-builder.

### **Will my project require plans?**

Engineered plans are required on all new commercial or residential construction including accessory dwelling units, additions, remodels for which the scope of work includes structural alterations, repair to code projects (repairing 30 percent or more of structural damage), and accessory structures over 400 square feet.

### **How long are permits valid?**

All permits are good for 180 days after issuance. If you will not be ready for inspection within this timeframe, you can request an extension of your permit by filing an [extension request](#) with our office.

### **My permit expired. What do I do?**

If your permit expired without you notifying us of the need for a permit extension, you will have to submit a [Permit Renewal Request](#). Per our renewal policy, permits renewed within 30 calendar days of expiration are subject to repayment of 75 percent of all fees. Permits renewed more than 30 days after expiration are required to pay the full fees of the original permit.

### **When do I need a Notice of Commencement?**

According to Chapter 713 of the Florida State Statutes, any improvements to a property greater than \$5,000 (\$15,000 for HVAC replacements) require a Notice of Commencement be filed with the Clerk of Courts office. Once you have filed your NOC with the Escambia County Clerk of Courts, you will need to upload a copy directly to the project in the customer portal. No inspections may be scheduled before receipt.

(Revised November 16, 2023)

**I am having issues with my contractor(s). What do I do?**

If you feel your contractor has committed fraud, misconduct, negligence, or has abandoned their contracted duties, you may wish to file a complaint against their license. While much of this is a civil issue, we can help you contact the correct departments to take action.

If your contractor is a registered contractor, you will want to contact Escambia County's Competency Board. Their number is 850 595 3488.

If your contractor is state licensed, you will need to contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR). You can [file a complaint](#) online or contact the local office at (850) 595-0143.

**I wish to remove my contractor from the job. What is needed?**

If you wish to replace your general contractor but replace them with another contractor, you will need to complete our [Release of Contractor](#) form. Once this form is completed, your new contractor will fill out an [Assumption of Project by Contractor](#) form.

If you wish to replace a subcontractor only, you or the general contractor will need to complete our Release of Subcontractor form. This form can be emailed to us at [inspections@cityofpensacola.com](mailto:inspections@cityofpensacola.com) or uploaded directly to your permit.

**I am no longer having work done that was permitted. What do I do?**

If an owner-builder or a contractor pulled a permit for a job but the work is no longer being completed by anyone and the permit is no longer needed, you would file a [cancellation form](#).