



CITY OF SAN DIMAS

Building & Safety Division

HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

Many people coming to the Building Division for building permits are homeowners like you. Whether your residential project is a minor improvement or a brand new home, building permits provide important documentation that the City authorized your construction and then inspected your home for compliance with applicable safety standards and local laws. You will often need to show this information to potential buyers and lenders if you sell or refinance your home. This handout is designed to help answer questions that frequently arise as homeowners proceed through the permit process for single-family home improvement projects. We hope it offers you introductory information as you plan your next home improvement project. For additional information, City staff is available to assist you at the public counter of the Building & Safety Division.

Building & Safety Counter

**San Dimas City Hall
245 E. Bonita Ave.
San Dimas CA, 91773
(909)-394-6260**

Hours

**Monday through Thursday..... 7:30 am to 5:30 pm
Fridays..... 8:00 am to 5:00 pm**

The Building Division of the City of San Dimas, is a part of the Development Services Department, and is charged with providing for life safety and the safeguard of property through the enforcement of the California Building Code, the California Electric Code, the California Plumbing Code and the California Mechanical Code.

These codes are intended to assure reasonable minimum standards of construction.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR MAJOR HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

✓ Which home improvement projects require permits?

Building permits are typically required for any home improvement, repair, alteration, construction or demolition project, including pool or spa installations. Permits are also required for re-roofing projects and improvements to plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems. When some portion of the proposed work includes construction or alteration of the sidewalk, alley or public street, a construction permit is also required from the City's Public Works Engineering Division.

Some common improvements are exempt from building permit requirements. These include:

- One-story detached tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses if they do not contain utilities, and are less than eight feet in height and one hundred twenty square feet in floor area
- Exterior freestanding walls and fences not over six feet high.

- Short retaining walls used for planters with level backfill and not supporting an adjacent building, pool or driveway. **See handout and contact Building Division first before assuming permit exemption.**
- Finish work including carpeting, wall papering and painting
- Replacement of toilets
- Fixing stoppages and leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures without replacing materials
- Concrete or asphalt patios or driveways constructed on natural grade. *Must not alter approved drainage. Alteration of driveway approach requires an Engineering permit.*

Although some common improvements are exempt from building permit requirements, the work must comply with applicable City municipal laws including building codes, and planning/zoning regulations.

✓ What kind of permit is required for my home improvement project?

To help make getting minor permits simple, the City has a Single Trade Permit for simple improvements involving only one type of trade such as:

- Door or window replacement
- Electrical (i.e. wiring, lighting and service panels)
- Fences and block walls over six feet high
- Mechanical (i.e. furnace or air conditioner replacement, replacing ductwork or fans)
- Stucco/Plastering
- Plumbing (i.e. hot water heater change outs, sink replacements, and re-piping)
- Re-roofing with no structural alteration
- Installation of patio covers which do not result in the addition of a roof deck

For more complex projects that do not qualify for Single Trade Permits, the City uses the **Combination Permit** that accommodates multiple trades. The Combination Permit allows you to pull one permit for the entire project avoiding the requirement of pulling separate permits for building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing trades.

✓ Do I need construction drawings (plans) to obtain a permit?

Some Single Trade Permits do not require plans. Plans however are required for: window change-outs, and relocations of water heaters or placement of new A/C condensers.

Combination Permits usually require plans. Depending on your project type, required drawings may include a site plan, foundation, floor, framing, and roof plans, building elevations and sections, construction details and structural calculations. When new floor area is added, an energy efficiency report is also required.

✓ Am I required to hire an architect or engineer?

When plans are required, it may be advisable to have an experienced design professional, such as a licensed architect or engineer assist you. Plans for nonstructural alterations, such as door and window replacements, can be drawn by anyone. For projects involving structural modifications, plans and calculations are typically required and must be prepared, signed and stamped by an architect or engineer licensed in the state of California.

✓ When do I need to provide a soils report?

San Dimas is located in an area that has substantial earthquake activity. In order to decrease the potential for damage to your home, a soils report (geo-technical report) with proposed mitigation measures is required for many project types:

- New homes or substantial additions
- Retaining walls over 6 feet in height.

✓ How long does plan check take?

We try to complete plan review as soon as practical. The following are approximate time frames for first check.

Plans for minor projects such as patio covers and pools	3 to 5 working days
Room additions less than 500 square feet	10-15 working days
Larger room additions, 2 nd floor additions, small houses	15-20 working days

✓ **How much will the building permit cost?**

Permit fees depend on project scope and complexity and are based on the market value of labor and materials. Basic permit fees reflect the estimated reasonable cost to provide any necessary plan review and inspection services and maintain City records. Partial fees are collected at the time you submit plans for review. The balance of permit fees is due prior to permit issuance. Additional plan review fees may be required if corrections still exist after multiple submissions. Staff is available to assist you with fee calculations at the Building and Safety Division public counter.

✓ **Do I need to hire a contractor?**

Homeowners can act as their own contractor (owner-builder) on their residence but we recommend that you hire a licensed and properly insured contractor unless you are experienced in construction work and intend to do the work yourself. You can verify the status of a contractor's license and find excellent information on how to select the contractor from the Contractor's State License Board at <http://www.cslb.ca.gov>. Informative handouts on contractor selection are also available at the Building and Safety public counter.

✓ **Who can get a building permit?**

Either the property owner or a properly licensed contractor may obtain a permit. **Contractors** must provide proof of identification, current California State Contractors License, current City Business License, proof of valid and current Worker's Compensation Insurance and a Letter of Authorization if the applicant is not the license holder. Contractors must also complete and sign a **Licensed Contractor Declaration Form**. Owner/Builders may have to provide proof of ownership if recent transfer or if the owner is a company, corporation or trust. A notarized Letter of Authorization from the owner is required if the applicant is an authorized agent. Homeowners must complete, sign and submit an **Owner/Builder Declaration Form**.

✓ **What time of the day is construction work allowed?**

Upon issuance of the permit, you will be provided with a construction job card. You must post the card in a conspicuous location near the work.

Monday through Friday 7 am to dusk
Saturday 8 am to dusk
Sundays and Holidays* No Work Permitted

✓ **How long do I have to complete the work?**

You must begin construction and receive an inspection within 180 days of permit issuance. To keep a permit active, an approved inspection must be performed every 180 days.

✓ **What if I want to make changes to my project after the permit is issued?**

City staff must approve changes to permit and plans prior to scheduling related inspections. If the scope of the proposed change is outside the scope of work shown on your permit, you will need to have your building permit revised and reissued. If plans were originally required with your permit, the changes will need to be shown on a new set of plans and submitted for review. After approval, you will be given new approved plans to show the City inspection staff at the construction site that your changes are authorized.

✓ **How do I schedule inspections?**

Before covering any work, you need to call and obtain inspection approval. Our request phone number is (909) 394-6260 and requires at least a 24 hour notice. At certain times a longer lead time is necessary due to inspection load and staffing. We try to accommodate a preference between morning (9 to 12) and afternoon (1 to 4) as our load allows.

To provide excellent customer service on inspections, we need you to provide our construction inspectors the following items upon their arrival:

- Inspection card given to you with your permit
- Required stamped approved plans
- Work to be inspected is complete and uncovered
- Authorized representative to allow access to the private portions of the property if applicable
- Safe and accessible construction site that poses no hazards to inspectors and construction workers