

Permits for Dwellings

My house burned down – do I need permits if I'm just replacing my house?

Yes – you're building a new house so new permits are required.

What if I'm just removing the existing house on my farm or acreage and replacing it in exactly the same place with a new house?

You will still need permits. You'll end up with a new house so new permits are required.

What if I'm building a new house on a piece of land that I farm? Agricultural operations are exempt from permits, aren't they?

No – agricultural land is not exempt in this case. All dwelling construction needs permits.

It's my land, why do I have to get permits to build a house on my property?

Permits ensure that your house is sited properly on the parcel and meets the required setbacks from property lines, County roads and other buildings. County development officers can also help ensure you don't build on easements or too close to well sites, EID canals, or environmentally or historically sensitive areas. In addition, building, plumbing and electrical permits ensure that the construction of the house meets the Alberta Building Code and is safe for the people living in it. The Private Sewage Disposal Permit ensures that the soil is able to treat the effluent effectively.

Are there any times when I don't need a permit to build a house?

No. All dwellings always require permits. It doesn't matter if the house is a mobile home, a house that you built from scratch, a house that you hired someone to build for you, or a house that you moved-in from another location. It doesn't matter if the new house is to replace an existing house that's been on the site for 100 years or 10 years. It doesn't matter if the house is new or previously used. If you're building a house anywhere in the County – hamlet, village, lake, farm, acreage – it needs permits.

I got a permit to build my house. Do I need a permit to build an addition to it? What about decks or sun rooms?

You need permits for any addition to your house, not only actual rooms, but also decks, sun rooms or elevated decks that you enclose. For example, if you're adding or replacing a deck that is larger than 100 ft² or more than 24 inches off the ground, you will need permits. If you're enclosing an area under an elevated deck, or adding a sunroom that's larger than 100 ft², you will need permits.

The bottom line is that anything and everything involved with your home must have permits.

If you live in it, it needs permits.

What kind of permits do I need?

You'll need a development permit to start. This permit is issued by the County and ensures that your project meets the requirements of the County Land Use Bylaw, which is based on the Provincial Municipal Government Act. Dwellings will also always need construction permits – building, electrical, gas, plumbing, and sewage disposal. These permits are required under provincial regulations such as the Alberta Building Code and apply to any and all types of dwellings. They apply whether you do the work yourself or if you hire someone to do it for you. Furthermore, if you go ahead and have the building installed or wired or plumbed before you get these permits, you'll still need to pay for the required permit(s) and have the work inspected by the County's contracted inspectors.

Who applies for my permits?

The land owner will usually apply for the development permit. If you are a renter, you can either have the owner sign the permit application form or provide a letter from the landowner giving you permission to apply on his or her behalf. Construction permits may be applied for by the landowner or the contractor that you've hired to do the work.

If you have any questions about permit requirements for dwellings or any other type of development, please contact the Planning and Development Department at the County of Newell.