



Botetourt County, Virginia
Development Services
Construction Compliance

Frequently Asked Questions

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Permits

When is a permit required?

A permit is required before ...

- constructing, enlarging, altering, repairing, or demolishing a building or structure;
- changing the use of a building when the new use requires greater degrees of structural strength, fire protection, exit facilities, ventilation or sanitary provisions;
- installing or altering any equipment which is regulated by the building code;
- removing or disturbing any asbestos-containing materials during demolition, alteration, renovation of or additions to, buildings or structures.

EXAMPLES. A permit is required for the following:

- Finish an unfinished area or basement
- Add or replace an existing deck
- Install attic pull-down stairs
- Replace sewer service lines
- Install swimming pool above or below ground when more than 24 inches deep
- Install *new* attic fan (*not replacement*)
- Installing new electrical circuits
- Installing gas-fired appliances
- Building a detached garage or utility building greater than 200 sq. ft. in size
- Changes to duct systems, plumbing supply, drain, waste and vent piping, appliance vent systems and gas piping, other than reconnection to replacement equipment

When is a permit NOT required?

A permit is not required for the following:

- Ordinary repairs which do not involve any violations of the building code.
These include painting, replacement of glass, most doors, floor covering and porch flooring, repairs to plaster or interior tile and other wall covering, and residential cabinets.
- Accessory structures used as storage sheds, play houses, or similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 sq. ft. (200 sq. ft. or less).
NOTE: must be structurally sound and anchored.
Zoning permit approval required for location.
- Most wiring and equipment that operates at less than 50 volts.

Repairs

Repairs do not include work on walls or partitions, anything that effects structural integrity, anything that affects egress or exits, removal or disturbance of asbestos, or work changing or replacing plumbing, mechanical or electrical equipment or systems.

EXAMPLES. A permit is not required for the following:

- Replacing existing plumbing fixtures when not altering supply or drain lines
- Replacing existing electrical fixtures when not adding or extending circuits
- Repair water heater
- Repair furnace or central air unit
(permit *required* for motor or compressor replacement)
- Replace deck or porch flooring boards (no structural changes)
- Painting or decorating
- Replacing residential cabinets
- Screen in existing covered porch
- Pour concrete patio on grade level without footer
- Residential roof coverings

If you are unable to determine if your work requires a permit, you may contact our office
8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday: (540) 473-8248.

Who may apply for a permit?

Permits may be applied for by the owner or lessee of the building or the agent of either, or by the licensed professional engineer, architect, contractor or subcontractor (or their respective agents) employed in connection with the prospective work. Engineers, architects, contractors or subcontractors must provide evidence that they are licensed to practice in Virginia, or that they are exempt from the requirements.

How is a permit obtained?

- No permits may be obtained by phone.
- A completed 3-part building permit application is required for all building permits. A sample building permit application can be viewed on our website.
- Electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits may be obtained in person or through the mail. You may call or write the building office and request an electrical, plumbing, or mechanical permit application and return it with the required fee.

May someone else obtain a permit for me?

Certain professionals employed in connection with the project may also obtain permits. The owner may also have a designated agent to obtain permits. An agent is anyone the owner has given authority to act on his or her behalf. Evidence of this authority may be provided as a notarized statement or a check for permit fees bearing the owner's name and signature. Proof of ownership, such as a copy of the deed, may be required before the permit is issued.

Should I purchase the permit or let my contractor purchase it?

It is our opinion, in almost all instances, the contractor should be required to obtain the permit as part of the project agreement. This is simply because the permit holder is the party responsible for the work and complying with the codes and regulations. A reputable contractor should have no problems obtaining a permit. It is usually those with no license or who have outstanding violations, who may ask you to purchase the permit.

- If you decide to purchase permits yourself, you may wish to verify a contractor's state license and registration by calling the State Board for Contractors at (804) 367-8500, or visiting www.dpor.virginia.gov
- You should also verify that a local business license has been obtained from the Botetourt County Commissioner of the Revenue, by calling (540) 473-8270.

In either case, we recommend that final payment to the contractor only be made upon final approval by the inspector.

How long is a permit valid?

A permit remains valid for as long as the work is proceeding. If the work is halted or abandoned for a period of at least six months, the permit may be revoked. Extensions may be granted for cause by the Building Official. If the permit is revoked, you may be required to re-apply and/or pay additional fees to re-activate the permit.

At what other time can a permit be revoked?

With the exception of work being abandoned, permits may only be revoked by the Building Official when false or fraudulent information has been provided on the application. Otherwise, the permit may be withdrawn by the applicant.

May a permit be returned for a refund?

Only under certain circumstances. Each situation is handled on an individual basis. If the project is incomplete, you may be eligible for a refund if certain requirements are satisfied and the Building Official approves.

Hiring a Contractor

What to do before you hire a contractor:

- Check to see if the contractor is licensed.
Persons or firms, other than the owner, performing work of more than \$1,000 must be a Virginia-licensed contractor under the regulations set forth in the Virginia Board for Contractors, Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (www.dpor.virginia.gov).
- Check to see if the contractor is fully insured.
Ask the contractor for copies of his/her certificates of insurance.
- Check with the local Better Business Bureau and Homebuilders Associations.
Ask if there have been any complaints filed against the contractor.
- Check to see if the contractor has a reputable business establishment.
- Confirm a physical address and local phone number.
Call the number to verify its validity.
- Inquire about employees and sub-contractors who will be working on your project.
Ask the contractor for a copy of their names and/or their licenses.
- Ask for references from previous clients.
- Contact referrals whose projects are similar to yours.
Ask specific questions regarding timelines, response to concerns and requests, job clean-up, and overall job quality. Ask to see a completed job. Your idea of a job well done may differ from someone else's.
- You may call our office for contractor license information only.

Manufactured Housing

What is a manufactured home?

A manufactured home (once referred to as a mobile home) is a single family dwelling built to the Federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards (HUD Code) and displaying a red certification label on the outside of each section of the home. A manufactured home is transported in one or more sections, built on a permanent chassis, and includes the electrical, plumbing, heating, and any air conditioning systems contained in the home.

Are manufactured homes inspected by HUD inspectors during construction at the manufacturing plants?

Under the HUD program, inspections of the homes and the construction and quality control processes are done by inspection agencies approved and monitored by HUD. In addition, the manufacturer also conducts inspections through the quality control program which is in place during the construction process. The red certification label (HUD label) is applied to each home which has passed the final inspection process.

What is involved in the installation or set-up of a manufactured home?

- After a *Manufactured Home Placement Permit* is obtained from the Botetourt County Development Services Planning and Zoning Office, you must apply for a *Building Permit*.
- A floor plan is required and must identify all rooms and areas.
- If the manufactured home is placed over a basement, signed and sealed plans from a Virginia-licensed engineer or the manufacturer's "basement" installation specifications are required.
- An *Electrical Permit* is also required.
- A *site plan* for decks, porches, stoops, etc. showing road frontage, size of parcel of land, and accurate distances to all property lines is required.
- Water and sewer:
 - Private system – Well and septic construction permits from the Health Department are required at the time of application;
 - Public system – A copy of the paid connection receipt from Botetourt County Public Works or the private water company is required at the time of application.
- When a new driveway is created onto a state-maintained road, a *driveway entrance permit* must be obtained from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).
- Upon request, a *Power Only Permit* and *Certificate of Completion* are available at an additional cost.

- Inspections will include all footings (prior to concrete being poured), plumbing, mechanical, electrical, skirting, decks and landings for compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.

May a homeowner apply for the permit and install a manufactured home?

Yes. The Uniform Statewide Building Code allows the owner of the home to apply for the permit for installation of the home. Owners performing their own installation work are not required to be licensed by the Board for Contractors. Other persons or companies performing the set-up work for the owners, including the dealer or persons under contract to the dealer, would be required to comply with the licensing requirements of the Board for Contractors.

Are manufacturers and dealers licensed and regulated in Virginia?

Yes. The Virginia Manufactured Housing Board, through the Department of Housing and Community Development, issues licenses and regulates manufacturers, dealers, manufactured home brokers, and individual salespersons as provided in the Virginia Manufactured Housing Licensing and Transaction Recovery Fund Regulations.

*(Information provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development ~
Manufactured Housing and Industrialized Building Office)*

Inspections

What's my next inspection?

Information about required inspections is provided in a *Residential Information Handout*, available from Development Services or the County website www.botetourt.org.

Where can I get a copy of the code book?

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code references a number of nationally recognized model codes. Depending on the type of work you will be doing, you may need one or more of these codes. Here is a listing of the codes you might need:

- 2006 International Building Code
(for commercial buildings, apartments and other multi-family structures)
- 2006 International Plumbing Code *(for all plumbing)*
- 2006 International Mechanical Code *(for all mechanical)*
- 2005 National Electrical Code *(for all electrical)*
- 2006 International Residential Code
(for all detached single family dwellings)
- Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (2006 Edition)

We do not sell code books. The listed code books can be purchased from:

International Code Council, Inc.
4051 West Flossmoor Road
Country Club Hills, IL 60478-5795

Phone: 1-888-ICC-SAFE or online at www.iccsafe.org

or may be viewed at all Botetourt County Libraries on CD-ROM.

How do I get an inspection for work performed under a building permit?

Once your permit has been issued, please call 540-473-8248. You will need to have your permit number ready when you call.

Administrative Information

If I decide, after I have applied for a building permit, that I am not going to do the work, can I get a refund?

If an application for a permit is canceled by written request to the building official within six months of the application date, a refund will be granted. A \$10 administrative fee will be deducted from the refund.

When is an asbestos report required?

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code requires that all commercial buildings built prior to January 1, 1985 to be renovated or demolished shall be inspected for the presence of asbestos-containing materials and unless subject to exemptions, the appropriate response actions shall be undertaken.

No building or demolition permits will be issued until the Construction Compliance Office has received certification that the affected portions of the structure have been inspected for asbestos-containing material by a licensed professional, and all appropriate actions will be taken according to the Clean Air Act (NESHAPS) (40 CFR Part 61, Subpart M).