

PERMITS?

WHAT PERMITS?



You have been planning this project for weeks, months maybe! Every last detail has been worked out. You know what you want to do, how to do it and how much it will cost. All the material has been bought and delivered. You call a friend to come over to help. “By the way”, you are asked, “do you have permits?” A typical response is “Permits? What permits?”

We can help

The following brochure contains a list of commonly asked questions and their answers. These are, of necessity, very general, yet will hold true for most situations. Realizing that each project is unique, we hope that you will call or visit our office with any questions.

Why are permits required?

Zoning was established in Norwalk in 1929 and is intended to protect the public’s health, safety and welfare by regulating land uses. The zoning regulations specify the allowable uses of a particular lot as well as the size, height and location of structures permitted. A zoning permit is needed to ensure that your project complies with these requirements.

Do all home improvements need permits?

No, many of them do not need zoning approval but may need approval of other agencies. We must still sign the plans as being exempt from review. Examples of uses not needing zoning permits are; fences, window replacement, reroofing, and siding. Paving for driveways may require a permit depending on size and location.

What type of work needs a permit?

Interior or exterior modifications to your home, including decks, additions, garages, etc.

Accessory structures, including tool sheds, swimming pools, etc.

Use of your home for a private business or “home occupation”.

What is the procedure?

To obtain a zoning permit you must supply specific information so that the zoning staff can determine whether the proposed use and physical structure complies with the regulations.

Generally, a ***plot plan*** drawn to scale showing the property dimensions and any existing structures as well as the location of any proposed additions. The plan should show the dimensions of all additions and distances from the property line. Schematic ***floor plans*** are also necessary in most cases. ***Two copies*** of the plans are submitted and a one page ***zoning approval application*** is to be completed.

Upon approval by the zoning officer one set of plans will be stamped “approved” and returned to you. You must bring this copy to the Code Enforcement Department to apply for a building permit.

How long will it take?

For an application with the essential information, a zoning approval takes approximately 15 minutes. There is no need to make an appointment, as all permits are issued on a “first-come-first serve” basis. 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. weekdays (except 11:00 am-12:00 pm on Fridays). Some times (such as Monday morning) tend to be busier than off peak times so you may wish to call in advance. Appointments are available in the afternoon.

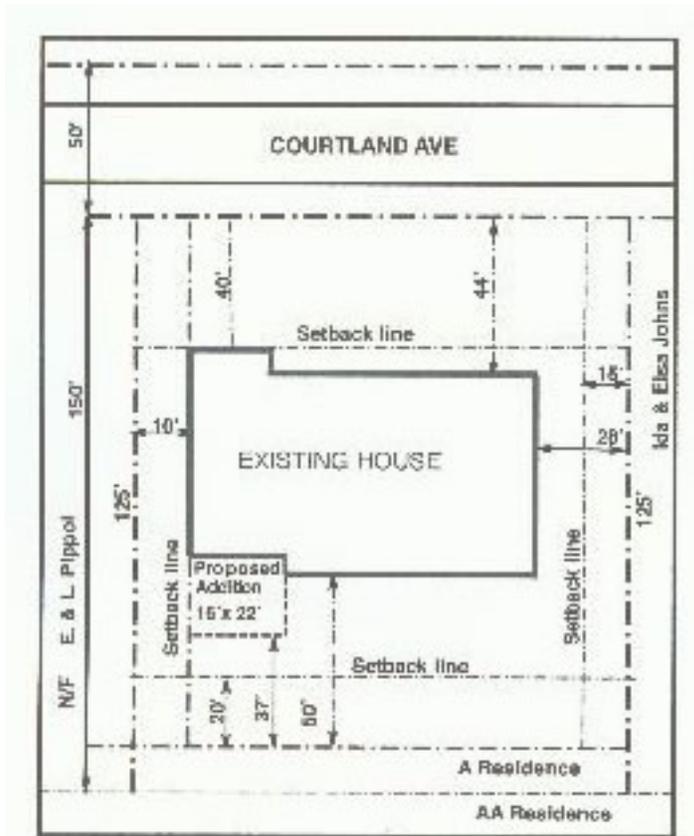
Who is responsible for obtaining permits?

Ultimately, the property owner. By law, any enforcement action is taken against the owner. If you are having a contractor do the work and get the permits ask for a copy for your records.

How much will it cost? The current fee for additions or accessory structures for a single-family home is \$60.00

What information is available for my property? For homes that were built or had additions after 1972, copies of the permits are probably in remote storage files and can be retrieved in 2-3 days. Please call to request this information.

The Town Clerk’s Office has copies of all subdivision maps and many boundary surveys. Many banks require property surveys as part of the closing documents. You may even have plans in your own files.



What happens if I don't get a permit?

The Zoning Enforcement Officer will issue a Cease and Desist Order and you must either get a permit or remove the structure within 10 days. Failure to comply with such an order can result in a civil penalty of up to \$2,500.

Who do I see if I have problems? We are here to help you comply with the zoning regulations. You have the right to prompt, courteous service and a reasonable explanation of procedures. All staff members are trained and willing to help with your concerns. Should you feel that you have not received proper service, contact the Director or Assistant Director.

Remember the only "dumb" question is the one not asked!

This brochure has been prepared by the Norwalk Zoning Commission to help residents in determining whether or not permits are required for their home improvement projects and if so, what procedure is involved.