

# City of Douglass

Updated March, 2015

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Building Permits

### Why do I need a building permit?

In 2003, the City of Douglass opted to adopt building codes to enhance public health and welfare for the citizens of Douglass and to sustain property values. Obtaining a building permit is a standard part of this process. A building permit is the instrument which places a project in the system for inspection. The inspection process is a means of protecting consumers from fraudulent contractor activity and ensuring that safety standards are met.

### How much is a building permit and where do I get one?

Residential building permits are \$25. Commercial building permits are \$25 plus an additional fee based on a sliding scale relative to square footage. Permits are available Monday through Friday at City Hall, 322 S. Forrest, Douglass, Kansas 67039. Call 316-747-2109 with questions.

### What items require a building permit?

- Anything that is structural or affects load-bearing walls.
- Window and door replacements when involving a structural modification.
- Re-shingling a roof
- Re-siding all or part of a structure.
- Replacing or adding new electrical wiring and service.
- Replacing or adding to a portion of the plumbing system.
- Adding a new, or replacing, a major component of a heating and air system.
- Most remodel projects and all new construction.
- Any project in question as to the need of a building permit is evaluated by the Building Inspector.

**What does not require a building permit?** Most maintenance and cosmetic repairs do not require a building permit. A sample of minor repairs that do not require a permit is as follows:

- Repairing broken glass and screens on windows and doors.
- Miscellaneous repairs of siding, trim and leaky roofs.
- Repairing sheetrock, replacing floor covering, replacing tiles and counter tops and trim.
- Replacing outlets, switches and most fixtures.
- Repairing leaking plumbing and replacing most fixtures.
- Normal maintenance on heating and air systems.
- Some items may require an inspection if being done in conjunction with a larger project.

### Who performs building inspections?

The City of Douglass subcontracts building inspections (anything relative to the inside or outside of a structure) to Butler County Building Inspection Services, which is part of the County's Planning and Zoning Division.

Anything outside of a structure, like water and sewer items (which have a separate permitting and review process), would be inspected by staff of the City of Douglass.

**When the inspector comes out, does he inspect everything?** When an inspector arrives, he will review the project as outlined. Any inspector, however, will mention to home owners anything identifiable as a safety hazard or a life safety issue, whether it's a part of the project or not. These safety items will typically relate to electrical wiring and adequate ventilation. The inspector may strongly suggest that the homeowner consider repairs of these and in some cases require repair of these items to ensure the safety of those occupying or doing business in the structure.

**How long does an inspection typically take?**

The length of time an inspection takes depends upon the scope of the project and work to be reviewed. Some larger projects may require multiple inspections, while smaller projects would only need a single inspection.

**What if the job doesn't pass inspection?**

If a job doesn't pass inspection, the inspector will identify corrections to be made. The property owner then contacts Butler County for a re-inspection once the corrections have been made.

**Does the contractor I've hired to do my work need to be licensed?**

Home owners can work on their own home but other individuals that are hired to perform work need to be a licensed, insured contractor and registered with Butler County. Electrical work MUST be performed by a licensed electrical contractor.

**I'm planning to build a shed on my property; does that require a building permit?**

The size of shed determines if a building permit is required; all sheds require a zoning permit, regardless of size.

- If the shed size is smaller than 100 square feet, no permit is required. Setbacks, however, will need to be met.
- If the shed size is 100 square feet to 200 square feet, a zoning permit is required.
- If the shed size is larger than 200 square feet, a zoning and building permit are required.
- If any size shed will have any type of footing, electrical and/or heat and air, a zoning and building permit will be required.

**I'm planning to build a carport; does that require a building permit?** A zoning permit is required but no building permit is needed unless a footing is involved in the anchoring of the structure and the structure is 200 square feet or larger.

**I'm planning on building a deck; does that require a building permit?** Any deck that is 30" or more above ground elevation requires handrails to be constructed to building code requirements. Decks that are attached to a house and a roof of any type require an inspection for proper fastening. Any deck 200 square feet or larger requires an inspection for footings.

Questions? Call City Hall at 747-2109.