



# Commercial Permits

# BP-1

Department of Building and Planning

The purpose of this brochure is to provide an overview of what information will be necessary to complete your application and to answer some common questions related to commercial building permits and inspections.

New commercial construction or the remodel/alteration of commercial buildings in Spokane County must conform to adopted standards, including the International Building, Mechanical and Fire Codes, the Uniform Plumbing Code, Accessibility Regulations, the Washington State Energy Code, zoning and land use regulations, and various other local and state laws.

A preapplication meeting with reviewing departments will generally be arranged to help determine your particular needs. We strongly encourage these meetings, particularly on major projects, prior to detailed preparation of plans and specifications to help eliminate costly changes.

## What requirements must be met before filing an application?

Many factors dictate whether a particular piece of property is compatible for a given project. Primary among these are the zoning of the property and the method of sewage disposal.

Please note that past zone reclassification actions for the property may have included special conditions, which could influence the design of your project. These conditions need to be taken into consideration in the site and/or building design. The Department staff can assist you in reviewing this matter or help you determine if the proposed use is compatible with the zoning of the property.

On-site sewage disposal systems, soil type, location, property size, etc. are all influencing factors. To verify whether your particular piece of property is capable of supporting an on-site septic system, contact the Spokane Regional Health District ((509) 324-1560), or the County Division of Utilities ((509) 477-3604) regarding the availability of a public sewer.

## What steps will be taken to process the building permit?

Initially the vast majority of commercial projects are reviewed at a preapplication meeting. The intent of these meetings is to identify the information necessary to submit an application for your specific proposal, provide information relative to any conditions of approval from a land use decision and provide preliminary code information. Usually the meetings are held prior to the submittal of a formal application, but we can schedule one upon receipt of an application if one was not conducted previously.

At the time of application, Department staff will be assigned to help coordinate processing and issuance of the permit. Documents, site/landscape/drainage plans and other information will be circulated by the project coordinator for review and comment by the appropriate departments. The departments will provide you with their individual comments. Substantial changes may require resubmittal of plans.

In order to aid you in obtaining a permit in the shortest possible time frame, and depending on the circumstances as determined by the assigned project coordinator, applications for minor commercial projects (i.e., small additions, minor alterations, etc.) may be circulated to the reviewing departments without the need to schedule a conference.

## How long will it take to get the permit?

If your application and plans are complete, addressing all county and state requirements, approvals for new commercial construction can usually be completed within 35 days. Special designs and major commercial projects may require additional review time.

In the case of commercial remodels or alterations, the complete application and approval process can be accomplished in shorter time frames.

## How much will the permit cost?

Fees for building permits are established by county fee schedules and are based on the size and use of the structure. Please refer to the county's current fee schedule or consult with department staff.

## What can delay permit issuance?

- Incomplete plans, particularly construction details as prescribed by the International Building Code.
- Incomplete information on plans reviewed by other county departments (drainage, landscaping, allocation of floor area usage, parking spaces, etc.).
- Improper legal description(s).
- Fragmented submissions or plan changes initiated by the applicant or their agent.
- Failure to submit revised plans and documents to the Department of Building and Planning for coordination and circulation. (All plans need to be submitted to the Department of Building and Planning permit counter.)
- Failure to respond to plan corrections noted during plan review in a timely fashion.
- Failure to adequately describe uses both within existing buildings located on the same site and in any proposed structures.

## Will I need other permits in conjunction with the application?

Approvals or permits from other county departments and state and local agencies may be required prior to the release of your building permit, including:

- Many commercial projects require plumbing and mechanical permits in conjunction with the building permit. Both are issued by the Department of Building and Planning ((509) 477-3675).
- If you are installing or altering a septic system, or if your project is such that a septic system may need to be enlarged or relocated, permits are required from the Spokane Regional Health District ((509) 324-1560).
- If sewer is available to your site, a side sewer permit will need to be obtained from the serving utility.
- Information regarding the installation or inspection of sewer lines can be obtained from Spokane County Division of Utilities ((509) 477-3604).
- Curbscuts, driveway approaches and the construction of curbs and sidewalks need to be reviewed by the Division of Engineering & Roads. Permits may be required ((509) 477-3600).
- Electrical permits for work in unincorporated areas of the county can be obtained from the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries ((509) 324-2640). For connection to the power distribution lines, contact the serving utility.
- You will need to contact the appropriate utility for connections to a public water system.

- Prior to renovation or demolition an asbestos survey must be conducted by an AHERA Building Inspector. A Notice of Intent must also be filed with Spokane Regional Clean Air prior to asbestos removal or demolition.
- If installing air pollution sources (e.g.: spray booth, boilers etc. , contact the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency.

## Once the permit is issued, what inspections will be required?

At a minimum, the following inspections are required:

- Footing/Foundation - After excavations for footings are complete and any required reinforcing steel is in place. For concrete foundations any required forms shall be in place prior to inspection.
- Framing - After the roof deck or sheathing, all framing, fire blocking and bracing are in place and pipes, chimneys and vents to be concealed are complete and the rough electrical, plumbing, heating wires, pipes and ducts are approved.
- Fire Systems/Fire resistant penetrations - Fire alarm and sprinkler systems must be tested and witnessed by a representative of the department. Protection of joints and penetrations shall not be concealed until after inspection and approval.
- Concrete slab and under-floor inspection - concrete slab and under-floor inspections shall be made after in-slab or under-floor reinforcing steel and building service equipment, conduit, piping accessories and other ancillary equipment items are in place, but before any concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed, including the subfloor.
- Lath and gypsum board (drywall) - After lathing and gypsum board, interior and exterior, is in place, but before any plastering is applied or gypsum board joints and fasteners are taped and finished.
- Special Inspections - The owner may be required to employ an approved special inspector for structural welding, concrete or other types of work under Section 1704 of the International Building Code.
- Plumbing - After rough-in, pressure tests, before covering, and final.
- Mechanical - Rough-in of piping, before covering metal chimneys, HVAC equipment installations, duct work, smoke/fire dampers and similar mechanical work before concealment and final.
- Site Improvements - Site drainage, landscaping, parking, etc., prior to occupancy. (An inspection is recommended at the grading stage, prior to placement of sod, etc., to verify appropriate grades).
- Other Inspections - in addition to the inspections specified above, the building official is authorized to make or require other inspections of any construction work to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this code and other laws that are enforced by the department of building and safety.

- Certificate of Occupancy - The final inspection shall be made after all work required by the building permit is completed and Certificate of Occupancy issued prior to occupancy of the structure or space therein.

In addition to the above inspections, any equipment, systems or materials, which would be concealed by framing, drywall, concrete, etc., must be inspected prior to cover.

If during construction problems arise where site modifications are required (i.e., parking, site drainage, landscaping, etc.), separate as-built drawings may be required demonstrating compliance with county requirements.

It is the responsibility of the permittee to see that the required inspections are made. Failure to notify this department that construction has progressed to a point where inspection is required may necessitate the removal of certain parts of the construction at the owner's expense.

When you are ready for any of the preceding inspections, please call 477-3675, and give the owner's name, project address, permit number and type of inspection needed. We can usually schedule an inspection within 24 hours.

Under certain circumstances, parts of your project may require inspections from other agencies, including:

- Road cuts for utilities or drives: Washington State Department of Transportation, (509) 456-3000 or County Division of Engineering and Roads, (509) 477-3600.
- On-site waste disposal system: Spokane Regional Health District, (509) 324-1560.
- Construction in a flood plain: Division of Engineering and Roads, (509) 477-3600.
- Electrical wiring: State Department of Labor and Industries, (509) 324-2640.
- Sewer and hook-up: County Division of Utilities, (509) 477-3604.
- Hydrants: Local Fire District.
- Asbestos/Demolition: Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, (509) 477-4710.

These agencies should be contacted directly for their particular inspection requirements.

## Will the permit expire?

Your permit will be considered null and void by limitation of time, three (3) years from the date of issuance unless a written request for an extension of the permit is received and approved by the building official prior to expiration. Ancillary permits such as plumbing and mechanical permits will expire by limitation of 18 months from the date of issuance unless issued in conjunction with a building permit.

## Other Brochures that may be helpful

BP-2	Demolition Permits
BP-4	Permit Fee Schedule
BP-8	Sign Permits
BP-19	Erosion and Sediment Control
BP-19a	Erosion and Sediment Control Techniques
BP-19b	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan Requirements
BP-26	Commercial Conference Information and Guidelines
BP-27	Critical and Hazardous Materials
BP-29	Public Assemblies
BP-31	Rules, Regulations, and Red Tape
BP-33	Site Plans and Construction Drawings
BP-39	Addressing
BP-40	Information Directory
BP-41	Commercial Change of Use
BP-45	Slopes and Setbacks
BP-46	Grading and Parking Lot Permits
BP-46a	Typical Grading Permits
BP-47	Tenant Improvements
BP-48	Non-Residential Energy Code
BP-51	Application Submittal Requirements
BP-52	Permit Processing Time Savers
BP-53	Project Planning Checklist
BP-79	Speculative/Shell Buildings

For more information or an appointment contact:

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 Department of Building and Planning  
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 Spokane, WA 99260-0050  
 (509) 477-3675      bp@spokanecounty.org  
<http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp>