Permitting & Inspections Information Sheet

Municipality of the County of Cumberland

Building Permits

Building inspection services help to protect public health and safety by ensuring that buildings are designed and constructed in accordance with current building codes and regulations.

Where do I apply for my permit?

You can apply for a permit by downloading our Permit Application Form. This form also includes the application form for demolition permits. Or you can apply for your permit by visiting our office.

Please read the application forms carefully. Complete all forms and provide all required information.

How do I renew my building and development permits?

Development permits are valid for one year and once it expires you must re-apply.

Building permits do not expire unless the project has not been started within one year of approval date.

What is the status of my permit?

You should be contacted within approximately three weeks of submitting your permit application. By this time, your permit should be either approved, rejected, or more information may be requested of you. Review of an application will involve file processing, examination of construction drawings and site plans provided, confirmation of zoning and setback, civic numbering and possibly approval from the Department of Environment and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Which building inspectors are in?

Building Officials are frequently out of the office, and their schedules vary daily. To make an appointment with a building official please contact us.

Why do I need a permit?

Permits are required in order to construct, move or demolish a structure. Changing the use of a building or area of land may also require permits. This guide is meant to help residents understand the process and obtain necessary permits.

Land use in the Municipality of Cumberland is governed by the Land Use By-Law which is intended to protect resources, promote orderly development and compatibility with existing neighbourhoods and to establish a fair and systematic means of development control for the Municipality. The Land Use Bylaw regulates the types of uses permitted in an area, minimum lot sizes, setbacks from watercourses and property lines and the conditions necessary to develop land.

Building construction in the Municipality is governed by the Building Code By-Law which is meant to help ensure that buildings meet health, fire, structural, and general safety and accessibility requirements for the protection of the individual, the consumer and the community as a whole. In Nova Scotia, all construction must meet the requirements of the National Building Code which regulates the structural requirements, construction of wall assemblies, egress rules, foundations, floor assemblies, roof structures/assemblies, energy efficiency, stairs and halls, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, drainage, appliance, lighting, fixtures standards and occupancy rules.

When are permits needed?

- New buildings (of any size, even a small "baby barn").
- An existing building being moved on or off a property.
- The demolition of a building or part of a building.
- Additions (bedroom, bathroom, porch, etc.).
- Foundations (new or alterations).
- Decks, wheelchair ramps, doorsteps.
- Storage sheds or garages (accessory buildings).
- Secondary dwelling such as an apartment, bunk-house or in-law suite.
- Renovations (garage conversions, finishing a basement, etc.).
- Any non-structural work valued over $5,000.
- Changing the use of a building or part of a building (operating a business, manufacturing goods, converting a basement, attic, garage or shed to living space, etc.).

When are permits NOT needed?

- Residential fences (fences for salvage yards, and some utility or industrial uses may require permits).
- Landscaping (including retaining walls, walkways and stone/brick patios).
- Parking a travel trailer or other highway licensed recreational vehicle on a lot.
- Replacing windows, doors, roofing or non-structural renovations/repairs with a total value less than $5000.
- What is the difference between a Building Permit and a Development Permit?
- A Development Permit relates to the use of a property and is required to erect, construct, alter, replace, relocate or add to any structure, OR to change or alter the use of land or a structure.
- A Building Permit is required to construct, erect, install, extend, relocate, make structural alterations or repairs to a building, OR to make any non-structural repair or alternation valued at more than $5000.
- In most cases a Development Permit and Building Permit are both required.

How long does the building/development permit process take?

Processing times for permits vary depending on the type of development and the number of permits in the system. Permits are processed on a first-come first-served basis. Once an application is complete, the application review process will normally take less than 10 days. Plan ahead to avoid delays.

Additional information may be requested any time during the process and the application cannot proceed before that information is provided. An applicant can reduce delays considerably by ensuring that all required information is included with the application, additional information is supplied quickly, and good communication is maintained with staff.

municipality of cumberland

How much will my permit cost?

Please refer to our Fees Policy.

When do I need inspection?

Construction projects are required to be inspected at the request of the applicant at all of the following stages:

- When footings are in place.
- Foundation, prior to backfill (before framing is placed on foundation).
- Framing, prior to insulation.
- Rough-in plumbing, prior to drywall insulation.
- Insulation & vapour barrier, prior to drywall insulation.
- Plumbing, mechanical, heating, prior to occupancy of structure.
- Occupancy, when structure is completed and ready for occupancy.

Call our Inspection line at (902) 667-1142 and speak with Melissa, or leave a detailed message including your building permit number, type of inspection, and location and your call will be returned shortly.

FAILURE TO ARRANGE INSPECTIONS AT THE REQUIRED STAGES MAY RESULT IN PROSECUTION OF THE OWNER AND THE CONTRACTOR, AS WELL AS ORDERS TO REMOVE THE CONSTRUCTION TO ALLOW FOR CONCEALED CONSTRUCTION TO BE INSPECTED.

48 HOURS NOTICE TO ARRANGE AN INSPECTION IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, AND 72 HOURS NOTICE MAY BE NECESSARY.

What else do I need to know?

- Permit is valid for one year from the date issued, if construction is not completed before one year, you will need to renew your permit.
- Your structure must be built to the requirements of the National Building Code of Canada 2010 & Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations.