



# **Guide to Obtaining a Building Permit**

July, 2021

## **Aim & Application**

This guide is intended to help you, the owner and/or contractor, to better understand the steps to follow to obtain a Building Permit along with the Building Department's expectations during the course of construction.

This is a guide only and is not intended as a substitution for the Ontario Building Code Act.

## **Contact**

If you have any questions after reviewing this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us, utilizing the following contact information:

### **Olivia Daigle**

Building and Planning Administrative Assistant  
admin@northernbruce.ca  
519-793-3522 ext. 226

### **Emily McDougall**

Building Inspector  
inspector@northernbruce.ca  
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### **Wendy Elliot**

Chief Building Official  
cbo@northernbruce.ca  
519-793-3522 ext. 227

## **What is a Building Permit?**

A building permit is your formal permission to begin construction. It means that plans for any new structure, addition or renovation have been reviewed by the Municipality for compliance with the Ontario Building Code, the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and any other applicable laws and regulations.

## **Why are Building Permits Required?**

Building permits are necessary to ensure that zoning requirements, fire and structural safety standards and other building standards are met, primarily for health and safety reasons. It is the homeowners/property owner's responsibility to ensure that a building permit is obtained when required. Through the use of building permits, a municipality can regulate the types of construction in the community and promote proper building standards. The building permit process protects the individual's interests as well as those of the community at large and provides for the erection of safe, sound structures in accordance with the Ontario Building Code. The Ontario Building Code Act states that no person shall construct or demolish a building or cause a building to be constructed or demolished in the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula unless a permit has been issued thereby by the Chief Building Official.

## **Definitions**

All definitions provided are excerpts of the Zoning By-Law 2002-54, as amended, Section 5.

“BUILDING” Means any structure other than a fence being a permanent edifice fixed to, or supported by the soil, and used or intended to be used for the shelter, accommodation or enclosure of persons, animals or things.

“CONSTRUCT” Means to do anything in the erection, installation, extension or material alteration or repair of a building and includes the installation of a building unit fabricated or moved from elsewhere.

“DEMOLISH” Means to do anything in the removal of a building or any material part thereof.

## **Projects Requiring a Building Permit**

- Construct a new building or structure on your property
- Renovate (material alterations), repairs, alteration or addition to an existing building
- Demolish or remove all or a portion of a building on your property
- Install, change or remove load bearing walls and non-load bearing partitions
- Excavating or constructing a foundation
- Changing weeping tiles, damproofing & repairing foundations
- Construction of basement or main floor walk outs
- New woodstove or fireplace
- Installation or changes to plumbing
- Decks more than 24” above grade (whether attached or detached)
- Construction of porches, sunrooms, solariums
- Construction of attached garage to an existing dwelling
- Construction of sheds and garages over 108 sq.ft. (accessory buildings)
- Dormers
- Carports
- Any structural change to new windows or doors
- Modular homes Prefab/manufactured structures in compliance with the Ontario Building Code
- Renovating or converting an existing building (change of use and occupancy)
- Swimming Pool and Fencing Permit (In ground and above ground pools)

When considering any construction on your property, it is recommended that you discuss your plans with Building Department first. This will assist you in becoming aware of other permits or approvals which you might need, such as demolition or electrical permits, Planning

Applications (i.e., Rezoning, Minor Variance or similar and the Niagara Escarpment Commission Development Permit). If you are not sure whether you need a permit, simply call the Building Department at 519-793-3522. Either you will get an answer on the telephone or a building inspector may visit your site in order to advise you about what is required.

**\*\*Special note regarding swimming pools: A separate in ground or above ground swimming pool fence permit shall be obtained from the Building Department whether or not there is an existing fence.\*\***

## **Projects That Do Not Require a Building Permit**

- Air conditioning units or heat pumps added to existing systems pool heaters
- Painting and decorating
- Landscaping
- Replacement of kitchen or bathroom cupboards (without plumbing)
- Free standing satellite dishes
- Structures less than 10 squared m (108 sq ft). However, compliance with the Zoning By-law 2002-54, as amended is still required.

## **Applying for a Building Permit**

Applications can be obtained from the Building Department or the [municipal website](#).

1. The Applicant must submit a completed Application for the Building Permit, inclusive but not limited to the following documents:
  - two (2) sets of construction plans (For work affecting the exterior, you will be asked to supply a floor plan, a cross section, elevations, roof plan and footing/foundation plan. These must be drawn to scale

showing all dimensions. For interior work, a floor plan and a cross section drawing will usually be required.);

- two (2) copies of site plan (including elevations where floodproofing is applicable. The plan shall contain all of the following information:
  - Existing and proposed grade elevations;
  - Proposed building envelopes – property dimensions and set back distances of structures
  - Septic system(s) location and elevations
  - Driveway location and elevations
  - Direction of all surface drainage

The plan must be approved by the Municipality prior to any work commencing. Please refer to the sample site plan available on our website);

- HVAC calculations (showing heat loss/gain); and
- septic system approval (where applicable).

Please note that you may be required to submit additional information/documentation specific to your property/plans.

The fee for the Building Permit is to be paid upon pick up, please refer to the [Fee Schedule](#) available on the website for a breakdown of prices. You may have to pay an application fee and additional fees and/or charges for such services as connections to the Municipal water (Lions Head) and sewer (Tobermory), if applicable.

2. The Building Department will accept the completed Application via email to [admin@northernbruce.ca](mailto:admin@northernbruce.ca), mail or drop off to the Municipal office, located at 56 Lindsay Road 20, Lion's Head, Ontario N0H 1W0.
3. Once received, The Chief Building Official, or designate, will review your application in terms of its completeness and compliance with the Ontario Building Code, the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and all other applicable laws and regulations.

Applications that involve minor alterations or additions can be dealt with more expeditiously while more complex applications naturally will

take longer to process. If a zoning amendment or a minor variance is necessary, or if the building plans must be altered to comply with the Ontario Building Code, all of this must occur and be approved before a building permit can be issued.

4. When the review of your application is complete, you will be notified whether there are outstanding requirements or problems. When all the requirements have been met you will be notified to attend at the office to pick up your permit.
5. Once you receive your permit, ensure that the permit and approved drawings are available on the construction site.

The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula is Dark Sky Compliant and individuals will receive a brochure at the time of issuing a building permit. The brochure is about helping enhance quality of life and habitat health through the preservation of the night sky.

**\*\*Note: Incomplete Applications Will Not Be Accepted.**

## **Demolition**

Before you demolish in part or whole, you are required to apply for a demolition permit from the Chief Building Official. The process for obtaining one is similar to that for a building permit and in some cases, you must hire a professional engineer to oversee the demolition. You should be aware that two special situations may affect a proposed demolition:

1. Demolition control areas designated under the Planning Act stipulate that a permit to demolish a residential property cannot be obtained without first obtaining a building permit for a new construction.
2. Heritage buildings intended for designation or formally designated as having historical or architectural significance under the Ontario

Heritage Act are subject to certain conditions which are available from your Municipal Building Department.

## **What Can I Do If I Am Refused a Building Permit?**

If you are refused a building permit, the Chief Building Official will advise you of the reasons.

If you have discussed the matter before hand and have not been able to resolve the problems, you can attempt one of the following options:

1. If the problem has to do with the interpretation of technical requirements of the Building Code you may appeal the application to the Building Code Commission by writing to the Secretary of the Commission (c/o The Ministry of Housing, Building Branch). Reasons for the appeal must be given.
2. In problems involving material and construction techniques, you can appeal to the Building Material Evaluation Commission by writing to the Secretary of the Commission (c/o The Ministry of Housing, Building Branch). Reasons for the appeal must be given.
3. If the problem arises out of interpretation of the zoning by-law you may apply to a Judge of the Ontario Court (General Division), who will review the zoning and decide if a building permit should be issued. (In this case you will want to consult a lawyer.)

## **Building Inspections**

The Inspector will be interested in reviewing the work being carried out for variances from; the Building Code, your permit and building plans as reviewed by the municipality. If the Building Official finds that the work does not conform to the approved plans, he/she will provide an inspection report setting out the infraction. Another inspection may be required before you resume work. If work continues without resolving the problem, you may be subject to legal action.



Building Permits often list inspections that are required under the Building Code. Inspections are required during construction to ensure that all work is done according to the approved plans and the Ontario Building Code. They may include, but not be limited to the following:

- soil and footing form work prior to placing concrete;
- foundation damp proofing and water proofing and installation of drainage tiles, prior to backfilling;
- roughed in underground plumbing and drains, prior to covering;
- storm sewer connection prior to covering;
- structural framing prior to insulating;
- roughed in above ground plumbing, drains, prior to covering;
- insulation and vapour barriers, prior to covering
- final inspection for building, plumbing and heating

**Inspections do not happen automatically. It is your responsibility to ensure that requests for inspections are booked at least 48 hours before work proceeds from one inspection stage to the next. For inspections call the Building Department, between regular business hours from 8:30am to 4:30pm.**

In addition to your co-operating with any inspections, you are also required to:

- **Post your building permit in a window or another prominent place on site.**
- Keep a copy of your building plans on site.
- Bring any proposed changes to the attention of the Building Official as soon as possible. These changes will be reviewed in the same manner as the approved building plans.

## **Site Plan Control**

Site Plan Control is applied pursuant to Section 41 of the Planning Act, RSO 1990. It ensures that development and redevelopment is undertaken in accordance with the planning, engineering and building requirements of the municipality. In doing so, it serves to protect both public and private

sector interests and helps to ensure that development occurs in a feasible and cost-effective way.

Site Plan Control is applied to both large and small-scale projects across the municipality and therefore, it also helps to ensure that all properties/investments are protected from adjacent development through consistent standards and requirements. Approval of a Site Plan and Site Plan Control Agreement is required by the Municipality prior to obtaining a building permit for commercial, industrial, institutional and certain forms of residential development (medium and high density residential, residential mobile home park, trailer park).

### **Sewage Site Plan Control**

The Municipality is particularly sensitive to the impact of sewage systems. Our pristine ground and recreational waters can easily be destroyed. The Municipality remains committed to disease prevention and groundwater protection. Some examples of sensitive areas are:

- Those with fissured rock near the surface. Sewage reaching the rock travels great distances and can pollute large groundwater reserves.
- Those areas with sandy soils are sensitive to nitrates from sewage/sewage systems and local wells can be at risk.
- Shorelines with cobblestone, shale bedrock outcrops, and sand require careful sewage system design and review to protect recreational waters.
- Those areas with clay soils, difficult terrain, sensitive eco systems and high-water tables.

## **Environment-Regulated Areas and Activities**

If you are living or working near an area which is characterized by any of the following features; water ways such as brooks, creeks, streams, rivers, ponds and lakes, wetlands such as marshy swamps, bogs, fens, steep slopes such as a ravine and escarpments that back onto water ways, then you are in a regulated area.

If you are planning any of the following activities, you should contact the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and Ministry of Natural Resources (contact information is provided in the Resource section of this Guide):

- placing of fill material of any kind whether the fill originates on the property or has been brought to the property from elsewhere;
- the construction of any new buildings such as a house, garage or shed;
- the renovation or addition to an existing building or structure;
- the installation of a culvert or bridge or a diversion or alteration of any watercourse and are in a regulated area.

If your property is within a controlled development area then you should contact the Niagara Escarpment Commission at 519-599-3340. Niagara Escarpment Commission approval must be met before a building permit can be issued, if your property is in a controlled development area.

## **Before You Dig**

Remember to call the appropriate utilities:

- Eastlink (telephone, cable, internet)
- Hydro One
- Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula (Municipal water and/or sewer)

## **Other Related Agencies**

Depending upon the location and type of construction, other agencies may require permits or approvals as outlined below:

### **Grey Bruce Health Unit:**

Address: 101-17th Street East Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 4K5

Telephone Number: (519) 376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456

Applicable for food handling, water, approval for restaurant and assembly uses.

### **Grey Sauble Conservation Authority:**

Address: 237897 Inglis Falls Road, R.R. #4 Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5N6

Telephone Number: (519) 376-3076

Applicable for construction near open water sheds

### **Hydro One**

Telephone Number: 1-877-ESA-SAFE

Applicable for hydro inspection notification

### **Eastlink**

Telephone Number: 1-800-331-7417

Applicable for location of buried cables 1-888-345-1111 telephone, cable and internet installation (sales, billing, repairs)

### **County of Bruce Planning and Economic Development Department**

Address: 268 Berford Street Wiarton, Ontario N0H 2T0

Telephone Number: (519) 534-2092

Applicable for property inquiries, minor variance, severance, zoning and Official Plan amendment applications

## **Ministry of Labour**

Telephone Number: 1-855-653-9260

Applicable for approval of certain types of buildings

## **Ministry of Transportation (MTO)**

Address: 306 Berford Street Warton, Ontario N0H 2T0

Telephone Number: (519) 534-3044

Applicable for properties located directly on Highway 6.

## **Tarion**

Telephone Number: 1-877-982-7466

Applicable for new home warranty.

## **Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)**

Address: 1450 7th Avenue East Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 2Z1

Telephone Number: (519) 376-3860

Applicable for building on or near a watercourse, shoreline development

## **Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC)**

Address: 1450 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 2Z1

Telephone Number: (519) 371-1001

Applicable for approval when property located within a NEC Development Control area