

Guide to Building and Permits



Overview



The Building & Planning Department is responsible for enforcing the rules and regulations ("codes") relating to the use, occupancy, construction, and demolition of all buildings and structures in Clawson. We assist residents and businesses with the permits needed for residential constructions and renovations, the limited commercial projects that require approval via permitting rather than site plan review and all commercial projects that have received site plan approval.

All commercial construction and most commercial property exterior renovations require site plan approval. Permits are not issued for these projects until site plan approval is complete.

The [City of Clawson Development Guide](#) explains the process for site plan review (print copies are available at the Clawson Building Department).

This guide explains the permitting process.

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Guide to Building and Permits



Getting Started

When Are Permits Required?

Permits are required for any work that is regulated by state or local codes and ordinances.

Why a Permit?

It's for safety - Permits ensure the project plans meet all code and ordinance requirements for the safety of current and future building owners and occupants.

It saves money - Insurance policies may not pay for damages caused by work done without permits and inspections.

It's the law - Permits are the official approval to proceed with a construction project and are required by ordinance.

Type of Permits

- **Building Permits** - For new residential construction and renovations, roofs, windows, fences, decks, pools, concrete with footings, commercial property interior renovations, and demolition of residential or commercial properties.
- **Electrical Permits** – For altering or adding to the electrical equipment or wiring
- **Mechanical Permits** – For work associated with heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and fire sprinkler systems.
- **Plumbing Permits** - For installation, alteration or addition to the plumbing system, sewer repair, and water heater replacement.
- **Zoning Permits** - for concrete work without footings, and for sheds under 200 square feet which don't require a building permit.



Photo credit: David McCullough

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Who Can Apply for a Permit?

Residential property: Permits may be issued to a licensed contractor or to a homeowner for their primary residence.

- If a contractor is performing the work, it is recommended contractor apply for the permit.
- If the property owner is the applicant, the City will hold the property owner responsible for the work, regardless of who performed the work
- Rental property work must be done by licensed contractors

Commercial property: Permits may be issued to a licensed contractor or the property owner.

- If the property owner is the applicant, they must indicate they are aware of, and willing to adhere to all applicable commercial building codes
- If the property owner is the applicant, the City will hold the property owner responsible for the work, regardless of who performed the work.
- A "scope of work" document is required for commercial renovations requiring multiple permits, except for those projects that have received site plan approval

Note: All contractors must register with the Building Department by presenting a current trade license, drivers license, and copy of liability insurance.

Where Do I Get a Permit Application?

Applications are available at the Building Department or [online](http://cityofclawson.com) at cityofclawson.com, on the Forms & Applications page listed within the Building & Planning Department.

After Applying, When Will the Permit(s) Be Issued?

Application requirements depend on the type of permit and scope of work.

Many applications may be issued the same day. Applications requiring the submittal of plans or drawings must be reviewed by the Building Official for adherence to Building Codes and City Ordinances and must receive approval prior to issuing permits.

All applications are assessed by staff to ensure the application package is complete and fee submittal is correct. Applicant is notified if additional details are required or fees need adjustment. Applications will not be sent for review until the application is complete and fees are submitted.

Permit review time by the Building Official is dependent on completeness of the application and plans or drawings submitted. Applicants will be contacted within two (2) weeks regarding plan review approval.

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Which Permits Require Plans or Drawings?

Building plans are required when a new structure is erected or an existing structure is altered, enlarged, structurally repaired, moved, or converted to different use group (as defined in the building code).

Dimensioned drawings (by sketch, survey image or Google Earth image) are required for new fences, concrete work, pools, and sheds under 200 square feet.

Which Permits Do Not Require Plans or Drawings?

Permits for electrical, mechanical, plumbing permits and non-structural alterations or repairs to an existing structure are approved by application only.

How to Apply for a Permit

Application requirements depend on the type of permit and scope of work.

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Request forms at the Building Department desk at City Hall

Download and submit in-person to the Building Department: [Forms & Permit Applications link](#)

Email to the Building Department Clerk Jon Weingarten at jweingarten@cityofclawson.com

Submit through the BS&A online system: [Clawson Online Permit & Payment link](#)

Applications are not processed until fees are received.

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For How Long Are Permits Valid?

A permit is good for six (6) months from issue date. If there is recorded activity on that permit, such as an inspection, in the first six (6) months, a six (6) month extension will be given. If there is no recorded activity on a permit within the first six (6) months, the permit will become invalid. Cancelled or invalid permits cannot be refunded. A reinstatement fee of \$75 applies to expired permits.

How Much Will the Permit Cost?

Each permit has a base fee and may have additional fees based either on a quantity multiplier or job valuation. Permits requiring plan review will also have a review fee. All fees are outlined in the [Building Department Fee Schedule](#).

Permit fees, and plan review fee (if applicable), are due and payable at time of Application. Permits will not be processed until all required documents and fees are submitted.

Permits and fees, however submitted, are reviewed by the Building Department for accuracy and applicants are notified if an adjustment is necessary to the application, drawings or fee.

Further information is also available on the City of Clawson website: [Fees & Payment Options](#)

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Building Permit Requirements

New Home Construction – See [Residential New Construction Checklist](#)

Additions or Renovations with Structural Changes — Residential and Commercial

- Building plans; 1 hard copy & one digital
 - ◊ Include a material list
- Dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed project
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable
- Depending on the scope of work:
 - ◊ More than one permit may be required.
 - ◊ Structural engineer approval may be requested.
 - ◊ Applicant will be notified following plan review.

Note: all commercial additions and most exterior changes to a commercial building require site plan approval. Contact the Building & Planning Department to inquire about exceptions to the site plan requirement

Renovations without Structural Changes — Residential and Commercial

- Building permit application
- Depending on the scope of work
 - ◊ Construction drawing may be required
 - ◊ More than one type of permit may be required. Applicant will be notified following plan review.
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable

Residential Garages and Sheds over 200 Square Feet

- Building permit application
- Building plans; 1 hard copy & one digital
 - ◊ Include a material list or the manufacturers specification sheet, if applicable
- Dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed structure
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable
- Depending on the scope of work more than one type of permit may be required. Applicant will be notified following plan review

*Building permit will cover concrete and footings. Zoning permit is not needed.

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Building Permit Requirements

Roofs and Windows

- Building permit application
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable

Antennae

- Building permit application
- Service provider contractor to provide drawing and specifications

Concrete with Footings

- Building permit application and a dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed project
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image

Fences

- Building permit application
- Dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed fence and distance to ALL structures on the property
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable
- Letter from neighboring property owner is suggested
- See the [Fence Guide](#) for more information
- See the [Pool & Hot Tub Guide](#) for pool enclosure fencing details

Note: Fence removal does not require a permit but a letter from neighboring property owner(s) is suggested if removing fence from the common property line.

Pools & Hot Tubs

- Building permit application and a dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - Depending on the scope of work additional permits may be required. Applicant will be notified following plan review.
 - Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable
- See the [Pool & Hot Tub Guide](#) for details

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Building Permit Requirements

Residential Wood Decking

- Building permit application
 - Dimensioned drawing (Plot Plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed project
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image or survey image
 - Depending on the scope of work additional permits may be required. Applicant will be notified following plan review.
 - Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor, if applicable
- See [Residential Wood Decking Guide](#) for details

Demolition — Residential and Commercial

- Building permit application
- Copy of signed contract from licensed contractor
- Confirmation letters of utility shutoffs - DTE, Consumers, and Water
- Asbestos abatement letter, if applicable
- Water shutoff permit from the Department of Public Works (DPW) [Link to DPW & Engineering homepage](#)

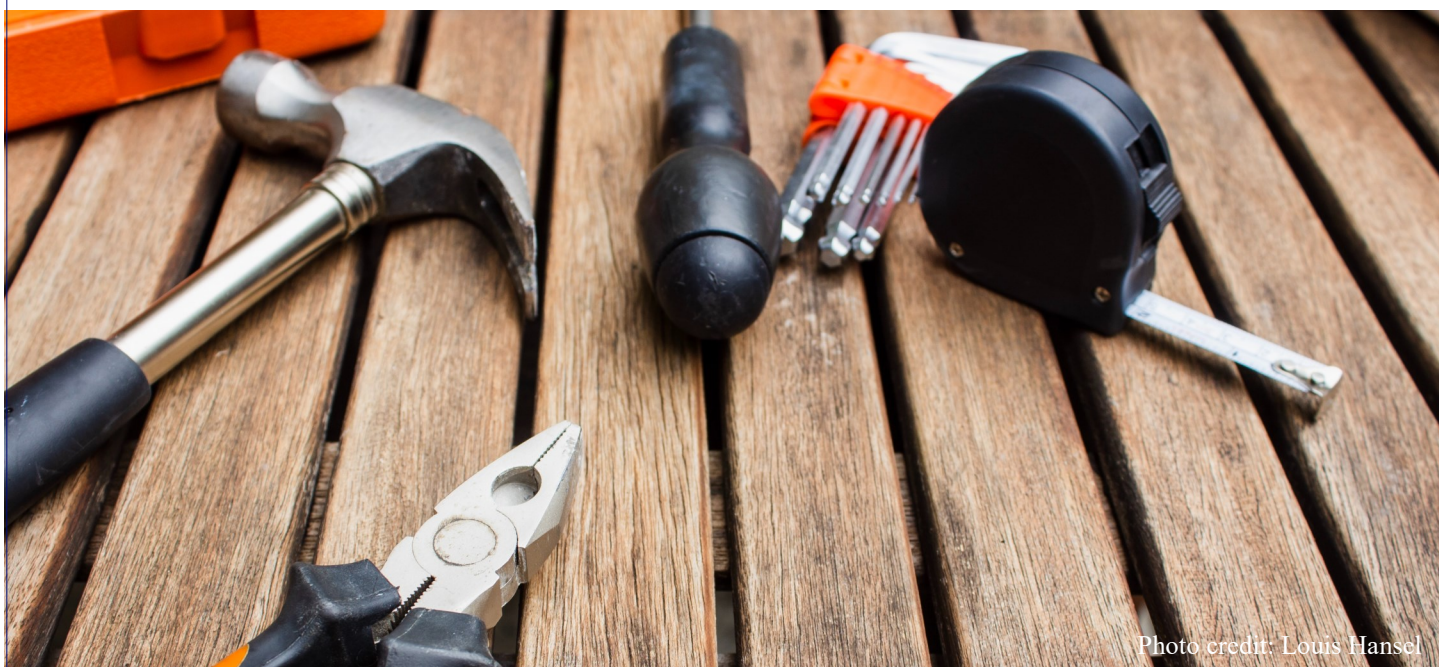


Photo credit: Louis Hansel

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Zoning Permit Requirements

Concrete without Footings — Driveways, Porches (under 30 inches above grade), Patios, Walkways

- Zoning permit application and a dimensioned drawing
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed project
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ may use Google Earth image or survey image

Note: Work in, or crossing, the public Right of Way (ROW) requires an additional permit through the Department of Public Works (DPW). [Link to DPW & Engineering Homepage](#)

Retaining Walls Not Over 4 Feet In Height

- Zoning permit application and a dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed wall and distance to ALL structures on the lot.
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image

Asphalt Resurfacing

- Zoning permit application

Chimney — New Build or Re-Build

Zoning permit application

Sheds/Accessory Structures Under 200 Square Feet

- Zoning permit application and a dimensioned drawing – may use Google Earth or survey image
- Building plans; 1 hard copy & one digital
 - ◊ Include a material list or the manufacturers specification sheet, if applicable
- Dimensioned drawing (plot plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed structure
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image
- Depending on the scope of work more than one type of permit may be required. Applicant will be notified following plan review

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Zoning Permit Requirements

Domestic Chicken Coop

- Zoning permit application
- Dimensioned drawing (Plot Plan)
 - ◊ Show lot dimensions.
 - ◊ Show the location and dimensions of the proposed project
 - ◊ Indicate project distance to all property lines, easements and buildings.
 - ◊ Show the location of all fencing and gates.
 - ◊ May use Google Earth image, sketch or survey image



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Inspections, Certificates of Occupancy

Inspections

Inspections are conducted by City Inspectors to ensure the completed work meets codes and standards for safety. The type of permit(s) and scope of work will determine the number of inspections and when they are required. Applicants will be notified of inspection requirements with submittal of permit application.

All inspections must be scheduled by 3:00 pm to be included on the following business day's inspection schedule.

To schedule an inspection, please contact Building Department Clerk Jon Weingarten via email at jweingarten@cityofclawson.com or by phone at 248-435-4500 Ext. 121

Certificate of Occupancy

Certificates of occupancy are issued only following a successful final inspection.

Certificate of Occupancy is required for each of the following prior to use of the property:

- All commercial property
- New home construction
- Vacant & Abandoned property as identified in the Clawson Code of Ordinances

Certificates of Occupancy are issued by the Building Department and will be sent to the building permit applicant by mail or may be picked up in-person when notified.

Commercial properties must have applied for and received a Clawson [Initial Business License](#) prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

See the [Certificate of Occupancy Information Packet](#) for the application and FAQ's.

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Exemptions

When Are Permits Not Required?

The following is a list of projects that do not require permits. This list is based on the most common inquiries and is not intended to be all-inclusive. If your project is not listed please contact the Building Department and we will be happy to help.

- Asphalt Removal (only)
- Asphalt Resealing
- Concrete Removal *
- Deck Board Replacement Only (No structural changes)
- Drywall (Residential only)
- Exterior Door
- Fence Post Repairs Only (Residential)
- Flooring (Decorative changes only)
 - ◊ Building permit will be needed for any structural work
- French Drain
- Garage Door
- Gutters
- Handicap/Wheelchair Ramp (Residential only)
- Insulation (2x3 (R-13) or 2x6 (R-19))
- Interior Door (Remove/Replace)
- Remove Fence - (*Installing a fence requires a Building Permit*)
- Remove Non-Structural Interior Walls (Not replacing)
 - ◊ Electrical Permit is required if outlets or switches on the wall will be removed
- Replace Kitchen Cabinets
 - ◊ Electrical and/or Plumbing Permits may be needed if appliances and/or sink will be moved
- Siding
- Storage Containers/Pods (Driveway only) ***Vehicles cannot be parked on the street.***

*Work that crosses the public Right of Way (ROW) requires a permit from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

[Link to DPW & Engineering Homepage](#)

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Codes Currently in Effect in Clawson

Clawson currently enforces the following codes in addition to the Clawson Code of Ordinances:

Residential

- 2015 Michigan Residential Code
- 2017 National Electrical Code (Residential)
- 2015 International Swimming Pool & Spa Code

Commercial

- 2015 Michigan Building Code
- 2015 Michigan Plumbing Code
- 2015 Michigan Mechanical Code
- 2017 National Electrical Code (Commercial)

Accessibility

- 2017 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities

State Energy Code

- Michigan Energy Code (ASHRAE 90.1-2013)

Fire Code

- 2015 International Fire Code (Adopted by City)

Property Maintenance

- 2018 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)