



City of Carmel-by-the-Sea Building Safety Division

A CUSTOMER GUIDE TO THE BUILDING SAFETY PERMIT PROCESS

The Building Safety Division of the Carmel-by-the-Sea Community Planning and Building Department has designed this guide with the newcomer to the permit process in mind. It details the steps involved in obtaining a building permit – from preliminary review through final approval. In addition to this document, the Building Safety Division has a number of Standard Operating Guidance hand-outs that can provide detailed answers to your specific questions.

Building Permits: When are they required?

Generally, you need to obtain a building safety permit from the City whenever you construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove, improve, convert, or demolish a building or other structure. A building could be anything from a tool shed to a house. A Building Safety Permit includes building and structural elements as well as plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits. The City processes the listed types as separate permits. If you have a question about permit requirements for your project, call the Building Safety Division at (831) 620-2059.

Preliminary Review: Before you apply

We encourage you to call or visit us before you submit your building safety permit application. In certain instances, such as when making exterior modifications to a structure, Planning Design Study approvals are required before you can apply for a building permit. If your project will require approval through a planning process, you must file a separate planning application and pay required fees to the Planning Division. Those fees are separate from the building permit fees.

We will also advise you on when it is necessary to speak with the Public Works Department, the Fire Department, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Management District (MPRWMD) or the Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) to determine if there will be any special requirements.

Do You Need to Hire a Professional? Ask us.

The City is committed to explaining the process as clearly and concisely as possible. However, the permit process can be complex, even for those experienced with it. Depending on the size and type of your project, you may need the services of a licensed professional. In fact, State law may require that a portion of or your entire project be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer. Our best advice is to check with the staff in the Building Safety Division to determine if the services of a licensed professional will be needed or required.

Applying for a Permit

You may apply for a building permit when the plans for your proposed project **are complete** and Planning approvals, if required, are granted. To apply you must turn in an application package at the City's Community Planning and Building Department. We also offer electronic permitting, which allows you to submit your complete building permit application, including forms, plans, calculations, specifications and other construction documents electronically through a portal on the City website. The application packet must consist of the following:

- ❖ Completed application, checklist and related forms
- ❖ Payment of plan check fees
- ❖ One (1) digital copy of the project plans
- ❖ One (1) digital copy of supporting documentation
(structural calculations, energy compliance forms, etc.)

The application forms and checklists are available at the Department counter, as well as online in the Applications and Informational Handouts link of our website at www.ci.carmel.ca.us/building-safety. You can review the Complete Application Checklist for what content will be required on the plans and what related forms will apply to your project.

Please note, the City charges its fees in two parts: Plan Check Submittal and Permit Issuance. You will be required to pay all plan check fees when the application is submitted and issuance fees once the permit is approved. There is a 3.5% processing fee for all credit card payments.

The Review Process: What happens next?

After your application is submitted, we will review your plans. Depending on the nature of the project, the review could involve several departments:

- The Building Safety Division will determine compliance with the California Building Code.
- The Fire Department will check for compliance with fire safety requirements.
- The Public Works Department will check for compliance with drainage, encroachment statuses, parking and driveway standards and public improvement requirements.
- The Planning Division will verify compliance with plans that were approved through the Design Study process.

Alternative Permit Application Methods

The City offers an alternative application method known as Permits-by-Appointment. This process is established with the goal of processing applications that are minor to moderately complex in nature. The intent is to allow applicants to meet with building staff for roughly one hour and leave with an approved permit. To schedule a Permit-by-Appointment you must contact the Building Permit Technician at (831) 620-2059 for scheduling availabilities. There is an associated fee established by the City's Master Fee

Schedule in addition to standard plan check and building permit issuance fees.

The appropriate types of projects for Permit-by-Appointments include but are not limited to: partial interior remodels such as bathrooms or kitchens, additions of detached structures not more than 120 square feet in projected roof area, deck additions that have previously received Planning approval, and stormwater drainage systems. This method is not appropriate for significant square foot additions, new residences or commercial buildings, additions of second stories, or exterior changes that have not first acquired appropriate Planning approval.

Obtaining a Permit: How long will it take?

The City reviews applications on a first-come, first-served basis. However, we are committed to processing your plans as quickly and efficiently as possible. Our goal is to complete first plan check within two (2) weeks of initial submittal. This includes review through all accessory departments including Planning, Public Works, and Environmental Compliance. In general, the more complete the submittal, the quicker the turn-around time.

Corrections, Clarifications, and Changes

We will notify you when the initial plan review for your project is completed, typically via email. If the plans cannot be approved as submitted, we will provide you with a list of necessary corrections in the form of a Request for Information (RFI) from all departments that reviewed your plans.

Minor RFI items can be made on the original plans submitted by the architect/designer of record. However, if major changes are necessary, or if there are numerous corrections, you will be required to amend the base drawings and resubmit copies of the corrected plans. Submitting thorough and complete plans initially will help avoid numerous RFI's.

When corrected plans are submitted, they will be distributed to the departments that generated the initial RFI for subsequent review. Plans submitted for recheck will generally require less processing time than the initial check. The City's goal is to process rechecks within one week for all projects.

Issuing the Permit

After the City determines that the plans satisfy all code requirements, you will be notified of the approval and will be required to complete pre-issuance items. Pre-issuance items may include but are not limited to:

- Obtaining a water permit through the Water Management District
- Obtaining an 811/USA Dig ticket number
- Wrapping and protecting trees on the site
- Scheduling a pre-construction site meeting for stormwater requirements
- Approval from CAWD for projects requiring sewer lateral work
- Paying any outstanding fees

Once all pre-issuance items are addressed you will be issued the permit and may begin construction. The permit will be a laminated card that must be continually displayed to the public right-of-way through the duration of the project. This informs inspectors, code compliance staff, and members of the public that the site is approved for the work being conducted.

Inspections

From the day you pick up the permit, you are allowed 365 days (twelve months) to begin work on your project. Once construction begins, you must continue to work on your project and pass at least one approved inspection every 180 days (six months) to avoid permit expiration. We will inspect your project as work progresses. You will be given an "Inspection Record" card with the permit, and you must have the inspection card and the approved plans available during all inspections. The card must be signed by an inspector after each phase of your project is completed, but before you begin the next phase. Building Safety Division staff will conduct an inspection on any regularly scheduled weekday you request, **provided you call the dedicated inspection line at (831) 620-2065 to request an inspection by at least 6:00 a.m. of the day you wish the inspection to take place.**

An initial inspection and one reinspection are included in the permit fees. Additional reinspections required due to incomplete correction of items identified in the first inspection will be assessed a reinspection fee in accordance with the City's master fee schedule. Reinspection fees must be paid prior to any additional inspections.

When work is completed, you must obtain approvals from all other departments or agencies listed on the Inspection Card (such as Planning, Fire, Health, and Water) before final inspection by the Building Safety Division. With final approval, we will authorize "utility releases" allowing electricity and gas services to be connected and provide a certificate of occupancy, if one is required for your project.

Useful contacts and resources

Carmel Community Planning and Building	(831) 620-2010
Carmel Inspection Line	(831) 620-2065
Carmel Building Division	(831) 620-2059
Carmel Code Compliance	(831) 620-2026
Carmel Environmental Compliance	(831) 620-2078
Carmel Forestry Department	(831) 620-2073

Monterey Peninsula Water Management District	(831) 658-5601
Carmel Area Wastewater District	(831) 624-1248
Monterey Bay Air Resources District	(831) 647-9411
811/USA Dig	(800) 642-2444

Carmel City Website – <https://ci.carmel.ca.us/building-safety>

Carmel Municipal Code - <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/CarmelbytheSea/>

CA Building Code Website - <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/Codes>

Building Permit Process

