

Building Permits and Inspections Process

The Building Division has prepared this information guide to assist you in understanding the City's Building Permit and inspection process.

"This information is provided for convenience only and is not in substitution of applicable City Bylaws or Provincial or Federal Codes or laws. You must satisfy yourself that any existing or proposed construction or other works complies with such Bylaws, Codes or other laws."

What is a Building Permit?

The Provincial Government through the Community Charter, Local Government Act and the B.C. Building Regulations has granted cities the power to regulate the construction of buildings and structures including the installation of plumbing, electrical and gas services. Burnaby therefore issues Building Permits as a means of regulating construction to assure compliance with the applicable Municipal bylaws and Provincial regulations.

To obtain assurance that buildings are constructed and facilities are installed in accordance with the Building Permit, Burnaby has elected to undertake inspections. Permission to occupy a newly constructed building will not be issued until all inspections have been completed and the work is shown to comply with the applicable codes, regulations and bylaws.

When is a Building Permit Required?

A Building Permit must be obtained prior to the excavation, erection, enlargement, alteration, removal, fire repair or demolition of any building or structure including accessory and temporary buildings.

Who is Involved in the Building Permit Approval Process?

Building Division

The Division coordinates the review of the Building Permit application and the inspection processes. Permits are issued under the authority of the Chief Building Inspector.

Other City Departments and outside agencies

Depending upon the complexity of the application, there may be involvement with other Departments and outside agencies, including Engineering, Fire, Planning and Fraser Health Authority, which will also be coordinated by the Building Division.

What is the Purpose of the Building Permit Process?

The primary purpose for the issuance of a Building Permit is to provide assurance that all buildings comply with life safety, health, and zoning requirements of the Province and the City. Building Codes have been established by the Province in order to set public safety standards. Until a proposed building design has been shown to meet the requirements of these codes to the satisfaction of the City, a permit will not be issued.

Who can apply for Building Permit?

The Burnaby Building Bylaw and the B.C. Building Code outline the responsibilities of the owner which include obtaining required Building Permits. The owner is defined as the “registered property owner(s) or a lessee with authority to build” such as the tenant that leases the premises. The owner or tenant can appoint an agent acting on their behalf to make application. Please refer to the “Who can apply for a building permit?” brochure for more information.

The Building Permit and Inspection Process

Stage I: Submit Application

In general an application for building permit shall include the following:

- Building Permit Application Form signed by owner or owner’s agent
- Agent Authorization form signed by owner(s) if the application is made by owner’s agent
- Schedule “F” signed by owner(s)
- “Consent to Construction” form signed by Strata Council or building owner if required
- Three (3) sets of construction drawings and all necessary documentation to demonstrate that the proposed construction complies with all applicable codes and bylaws.
- A non-refundable application fee in accordance with the current fee schedule

Additional and specific information may be required for specific type of works, site locations or particular design solutions. Please refer to the brochures for specific types of permit applications.

Although not necessary, applications for Sub-Trade Permits (electrical, plumbing, gas and fire sprinkler) may also be submitted at this time, but will not be issued until the Building Permit has been issued (see Stage IV).

Stage II: Application Review

At the time of application, a staff member conducts a brief review of the documentation submitted to determine if the application and documentation is complete and to advise of any additional requirements.

A Plan Checker is assigned the responsibility of processing the application which includes referral to the Electrical and Plumbing & Gas Inspections, the Fire and Engineering Departments; and Fraser Health as required for comment.

The Plan Checker also undertakes a review of the application with respect to compliance with the Provincial Building Code and appropriate City Bylaws. As some of the applications require Preliminary Plan Approval (PPA) from the Planning Department, the application is also reviewed on the basis of its compliance with the PPA approved drawings.

Once the comments from the other Departments and/or outside agencies have been reviewed, the Plan Checker determines whether the Building Permit can be issued or the application requires corrections. If revisions are needed, you will be informed accordingly.

Stage III: Issuance of Building Permit

A Building Permit will be issued once all the requirements are met. When the Building Permit is issued, the Building Permit Fee less the application fee must be paid. The amount payable is set out in a fee schedule and is based upon the total construction value. Engineering Department fees for service connections, vehicle crossings, damage deposits, etc. are also paid at this time.

Stage IV: Obtain Sub-Trade Permit

Additional permits for electrical, plumbing, gas or fire protection work are to be applied for by a sub-trades contractor licenced to do such work in the City.

Upon completion of the appropriate permit application form and payment of the permit fee, a sub-trade permit is issued provided that a Building Permit has been issued where required. Permit fee schedules are available from the Building Division upon request.

An owner and occupier of a detached single family dwelling may obtain a permit to do his own work by completing a permit application form, a homeowner declaration form and paying the permit fee. The city reserves the right to determine whether the applicant is capable of doing such work safely and in compliance with Burnaby Bylaws.

Sub-trade permits cannot be issued to an owner and occupier of a two family dwelling or any property that possess a suite or laneway home.

Stage V: Construction Inspection

As the construction project proceeds through the various stages, inspections are conducted by the Building Division. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to contact the Building Department to request an inspection. A minimum of Twenty-four (24) hours notice is required.

There are a number of different types of inspections including forms, drain tile, damp proof (walls, slabs), sheathing, framing, insulation, sewer, plumbing, water pipe, gas vent, and wiring that may be required. Please obtain a copy of the inspection list that is available at the Building Division.

Stage VI: Obtain Certificate of Occupancy

Once all the Final Inspections have been completed, the Building Inspector may issue a Certificate of Occupancy.

How much time does the process take?

The processing time for applications varies depending upon the complexity of the project. In the case where a proposed development requires rezoning and subdivision approvals, PPA will not be granted until the other approvals are in place and this will in turn delay the issuance of the building permit.

As might be expected, the amount of time to process a Building Permit is also largely dependent upon the completeness and accuracy of the application. In addition, the time frame is affected by how well the applicant responds to meeting the requirements outlined in the applicable regulations.

For Further Information

This information is meant to act only as a general guide. Please consult the Local Government Act, the Building, Plumbing, Electrical and Gas Codes, the Zoning and Building Bylaws, and other bylaws for definitive requirements and procedures. For more specific information related to individual applications contact the Building Division at 604-294-7130.