

CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO BUILDING PERMITS

(Updated in July 2024)





Disclaimer This information package is provided by the City of Port Colborne Building Division for information purposes only. It provides various requirements from the applicable By-Laws and Ontario Building Code (OBC). In any case where there exists a discrepancy between the information in this document and the City of Port Colborne By-Laws or the OBC, the requirements established by By-Law or OBC shall prevail. This information package is intended to assist residents in making educated decisions when planning construction. The individual property owner/applicant is solely responsible to ensure that all required By-Laws, Codes, and Regulations are met, and all projects are maintained to the requirements of the municipality through its By-Laws.

WHAT IS A BUILDING PERMIT?

Building and Plumbing permits are required to make sure construction is done to a safe level as prescribed by the **Ontario Building Code**, the Building By-Law and other applicable legislation. Building without a Permit is an offense, and all buildings must comply with the Zoning By-Law, even if a Permit is not required.

This guide will help you understand when a permit is required and throughout the application process to get a permit before you start construction.

THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

Before Applying

Contact the Planning Department to get their approval on Grading and Zoning. Then consult with the Building Clerk to determine what type of documents are required.

Submit Complete Application

With the forms, supporting documents, plans and the fee.

Your Application is Reviewed

For completeness and compliance with the Ontario Building Code.

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A Decision is Made

To approve or deny your application.

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If a Permit is Issued

Construction can begin.

Building Inspections Take Place

The building inspector checks major phases of construction to completion.

Comments

May be made by other municipal officials.

Appeals

Can be made if application is turned down.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When is a building permit REQUIRED?

Answer: As per legislation, Building Permits are required for, but not limited to, the following:

- New construction or prefabricated building larger than 10 m2 (108 ft2) in area, or less if containing plumbing,
- Accessory structure over 15 m2 (161 ft2) detached garage, workshop, shed, carport, pool house,
- Renovation or addition to existing house
- Alterations affecting any building system or structure,
- Demolition,
- Farm building,
- Material alterations,
- New banner or digital signs attached to a building (sign),
- Change of use/tenancy,
- New fireplace, chimney, or repairs,
- New deck with guards over 600 m (23 5/8 in) above grade,
- New openings in existing building or replacement for larger doors and windows,
- Installing new or replacing guards,
- New heating equipment, insulation, or plumbing,
- Outdoor pool with water depth greater than 3.5 m (11.5 ft) at any point,
- New partition of full height (including non-load bearing),
- Covered porch or deck,
- Renovations in a house over 5 years old (OBC Part 11),
- Retrofit (see Ontario Fire Code),
- New roof sheathing,
- New stairs,
- Permanent tent or temporary structure over 60 m2 (645 ft2),
- Temporary outdoor event stage over 5 m of height (16.4 ft) or over 60 m2 (645 ft2) and 3 m (10 ft) height,
- Relocating a building or structure,
- Underpinning foundations,
- Any other building or structure designated by the Ontario Building Code.

2. What kind of construction does NOT typically require a permit?

Answer: The following is a list of projects that generally do not require a permit; however, construction must still comply with the **Ontario Building Code** and associated Applicable Laws (for example, Zoning By-Law):

- Re-shingling of a roof,
- Replacing doors or window of equal or smaller size,
- Kitchen or bathroom cabinets (no plumbing),
- New flooring, painting, and decorating,
- Detached accessory buildings or additions less than 10 m2 (108 ft2),
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures with NO modification to the plumbing system,
- Replacement of heating equipment with NO modification to the distribution system,
- Adding or replacing insulation due to damage,

- Alterations not affecting any building system or structure,
- Balcony or guards repairs,
- Building or repair of decks with no roof and height less than 600 m (23 5/8 in) above grade,
- Building less than 15 m2 (161 ft2) that contains no plumbing,
- Building pergola/no roof structure less than 15 m2 (161 ft2),
- Repair or replacement of exterior finishes,
- Fireplace minor repairs,
- Non-structural repairs of foundations,
- Replacement of interior finishes or partition drywall,
- Replacement of signs in existing sign box,
- Tents or temporary structure of 60 m2 (645 ft2) or less that are 3 m (10 ft) clear of any other structure,
- Temporary outdoor event stage under 60m2 (645 ft2) and 3 m (10 ft) height (not create hazard to the public).

3. Why do I need to obtain a Building Permit?

Answer: By reviewing and approving plans prior to the start of construction, staff can ensure that the proposed project complies with:

- The **Ontario Building Code**, which sets standards for the design and construction of buildings to ensure the structure meets health, safety, and accessibility objectives,
- The Zoning By-law,
- The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA),
- Other Applicable Laws.

This allows the City to protect the interests of both individuals and the community.

4. How do I apply for a Building Permit?

Answer: The first step in applying for a Building Permit is to consult with the Building Department to ensure that you submit all the necessary documents and information, as incomplete applications may be delayed due to missing information. The Building Department will inform you of what drawings and plans are required, and if you will need any other permits or approvals.

A permit application form can be found on the **City of Port Colborne's** website under the <u>Building & Construction page</u>. A complete application and all required plans and documents may be submitted to the Building Department at City Hall. Further in this guide you will find a list of required drawings and instructions on how to fill the forms.

5. Where can I find information on Ontario Building Code items?

Answer: The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the governing body that administers the **Ontario Building Code**. Their website is available at https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-municipal-affairs-housing.
It contains not only Building Code information, but also other items as training information and related publication. If a copy of the **Ontario Building Code** is desired, it can be found online through e-laws.

6. Can I draw my own building plans/drawings?

Answer: The **Ontario Building Code** essentially states that all designs forming part of a Building Permit application must be prepared by a qualified designer; however, it allows for a few key exemptions. Some of the exemptions to requiring the use of a qualified designer are:

- Construction/renovations to a house by the person who is the owner (not more than 2 dwellings and with no dwelling above another dwelling) (excluding HVAC);
- Deck serving a house which is owned by the person; and
- Accessory building serving a house which is owned by the person, area not more than 50 m2 (538 ft2).

NOTE: The above list is only short list of examples and that the **Ontario Building Code Div. C Part 3** is to be consulted for all exemptions.

7. What does a Building Permit costs?

Answer: Building Permit fees will vary depending on type of construction, but they include building inspections, civic addresses, development charges, etc. They are set by By-Law and can be found at this page. You also may contact the Building Department to get an estimate.

8. What are Development Charges?

Answer: They are established by By-Law and help offset the costs of municipal infrastructure effected by expanding development. The fees are due before a Building Permit may be issued.

9. Do I need a Plumbing Permit?

Answer: A Building Permit is required for the installation of any plumbing fixtures or modification to any plumbing and drainage systems. Inspections are required.

10.Do I need a new home warranty registration number?

Answer: A registration number is required for new house construction where a person other than the homeowner is the builder or general contractor. You are not considered a builder or general contractor unless you are specifically arranging, organizing, and paying for each of the trades.

11. What happens next?

Answer: After submitting your complete application with the non-refundable application fee, staff will review your proposal to ensure it complies with the **Ontario Building Code**, the Building By-Law, and all other Applicable Laws such as, but not limited to, the Zoning By-law. Your application may also be circulated to other municipal official for comments.

If a Minor Variance or a Zoning By-Law amendment is required, a permit will not be issued until such are obtained. Additionally, if the proposal does not comply with the **Ontario Building Code**, a permit will not be issued until the proposal is brought into compliance.

After reviewing your application, staff will decide to either approve or refuse your application. If your application is approved, a permit will be issued, and construction can begin. The Building Inspector will check all major phases of construction, from commencement to completion.

12. How long is a permit valid for?

Answer: The time frame in which the project must be substantially started is six (6) months of issuance. From this point, you have 1 year to complete the project. If more time is needed, you may write to the **Chief Building Official** stating the reasons for requiring an extension and he may choose to grant more time to complete the project. If construction has not started within 6 months, or if at any point construction has stopped for a significant amount of time, the **Chief Building Official** may choose to void the permit.

13. How do inspections take place?

Answer: After a building permit has been issued, inspections from Building Department staff are required at various stages of construction. The owner is responsible for ensuring the inspections are booked. A minimum of two (2) working days notice is required to book an inspection. The inspections will ensure the requirements set out in the Ontario Building Code, the Building By-Law and other applicable regulations are met. You will receive a permit package with instructions on what inspections are required for your project.

14. Why do I need inspections?

Answer: Proper inspections will ensure that construction is safe and that it meets the **Ontario Building Code**, minimum requirements. This will help protect your investments and contribute to a better standard of development for the community.

15. What are my obligations during construction?

- a. **POST** your Building Permit so that it is visible from the street.
- b. **KEEP** a copy of your building plans on the construction site.
- c. **NOTIFY** the Building Inspector at least 2 working days in advance of the stage of construction requiring notice indicated on the Building Permit.
- d. **NOTIFY** the Building Inspector of any proposed changes to your building plans. These will require approval prior to change.

16. When can I occupy the building?

Answer: When notice of the date of completion is given to the **Chief Building Official** and a final inspection has been made.

17. Can I occupy an unfinished building?

Answer: Partial Occupancy of an unfinished building may be granted provided the conditions of the **Ontario Building Code** are met, e.g., fire & safety components, water & sewage components, etc.

18. What to do if my application is turned down?

Answer: The Building Department will explain why your application could not be approved. If these issues cannot be resolved, then there are a few options for appealing the decision.

If there is a problem related to technical requirements in the **Ontario Building Code**, you may apply for a hearing to the Building Code Commission, which is an independent adjudicative tribunal of the provincial government. The Building Code Commission hears disputes over technical requirements set out in the **Ontario Building Code**.

If the problem relates to compliance with other applicable laws, you can appeal to a judge of the Superior Court of Justice. It is recommended that you contact a lawyer first.

19. What can result from not obtaining a building permit?

Answer: It is unlawful to commence construction without a building permit. If the work does not comply with the **Ontario Building Code** requirements, costly repairs may be required to gain compliance, removal of work done not in compliance may be required, the Building Permit application fee may be increased, and legal action may be initiated by the Building Division to gain compliance. If you are still not certain whether your project requires a Building Permit, contact the Building Division. Our staff will be able to assist you in making that determination.

NOTE: The issuing of a Building Permit does not in any way relieve the Owner or his agent from complying with all the rules and regulations of the Zoning By-Laws, the **Ontario Building Code**, or any other Applicable Law.

REQUIRED DRAWINGS

One of the most crucial parts of a Building Permit application are the associated drawings. These drawings allow the Department(s) to review the proposed project prior to construction. The more complete the drawings are, the better the review can be, and the more items can be identified prior and rectified to construction.

Although a homeowner may be exempt from requiring a design from a qualified person, if a homeowner decides to create their own drawings, it is their responsibility to ensure that the drawings contain sufficient information and that the design is compliant to the **Ontario Building Code**. For this reason, it is recommended to consider the help from a designer if the project is more complex then one's ability.

Here is a list of plans and working drawings, as defined in the **Ontario Building Code**, required to accompany the application (check the correct list of drawings you need according to the type of construction):

- Site Plan
- Foundation Plan
- Framing Plan
- Section Plans and Details
- Electrical Plan
- Plumbing Plan

- Lot grading Plan
- Floor Plans
- Roof Plan
- Elevation Plans
- Heating and Ventilation Plans
- Fire alarm, Sprinkler, Standpipe Plans

Please contact the Building Division if you require more information on what qualifications are needed and for help on how to find a qualified designer, who will have a **Building Code Identification Number (BCIN)** or be a registered member of the **Professional Engineers Ontario** or **Ontario Association of Architects**.

What is a Site Plan?

Answer: It is a plot or survey plan showing a "bird's eye" view of the property and should contain:

- Municipal address
- Lot and concession number
- Use of building
- Location of all buildings

- Lot dimensions and setbacks
- Vehicle access (driveway)
- Right-of-way (if applicable)
- Drainage plan

What is important to show in a Foundation Plan?

- All dimensions and scale
- Floor framing above (material, size and spacing)
- Beams and columns (material, size and spacing)
- Stair location, number and height of steps
- Foundation wall details
- Footings details
- Partition walls
- Doors and windows with sizes

- Lintels details
- Location of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and all plumbing fixtures
- Furnace location
- Floor drain
- Intended use of spaces (label rooms)
- Fire separation location, rating, and construction details (if applicable)

What is important to show in a Floor Plan?

- All dimensions and scale
- Floor framing or roof framing above (material, size and spacing)
- Beams and columns (material, size and spacing)
- Stair location, number and height of steps
- Partition walls
- Doors and windows with sizes

What is important to show in a Floor Plan?

- All dimensions and scale
- Materials
- Roof structure
- Skylights (if applicable)
- Roof slopes, hips/valleys/peaks
- What is important to show in Elevation Plans?
- All dimensions and scale
- Grade location
- All sides of building, detailing exterior finishes with roof slopes
- Doors and windows locations with sizes, including height of sills above floor level
- What is important to show in Cross Section Plans?
- All dimensions and scale
- Vertical height dimensions
- Building construction and specifications of all floor, wall, and roof assemblies

- Lintels details
- Location of smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and all plumbing fixtures
- Intended use of spaces (label rooms)
- Fire separation location, rating and construction details (if applicable)
- Ventilation
- Ridge support
- Truss drawings and floor joist plan, where engineered systems are proposed
- Area of exposed building face, percentage/area of unprotected openings and required limiting distance(s)
- Exterior decks/landings, stairs, guards/handrails
- Overall building height dimension
- Footing and foundation wall details including height of exterior grade above basement floor
- Detail stairs, landings, guards & handrails
- Roof pitch and overhang
- Lintels, beams, and columns

All buildings are still required to meet the City's Zoning By-law regardless if a Building Permit is required. As well, a Municipal Consent Permit may be required for your project if work is done in the municipal right-of-way. More information can be found on the <u>Municipal Consent Permit</u> page.

HOW TO FILL OUT A PROVINCIAL BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION

The **Ontario Building Code** says what is required for a permit application. The following are the main parts:

- Completed application form,
- Schedule 1 or 2,
- Authorization from the owner, if you are not the owner, for making an application on their behalf,
- Payment of permit fees,
- Applicable Law approvals if required,
- Required Drawings.

A complete application will allow the Building Department to review in a timely manner (10 business days for most single-family dwelling projects), expedite the process, and reduce the need for follow up. Incomplete applications may delay the permit issuance. After the review is complete, the permit issued and picked up, construction can start.

A. Project Information Application for a Permit to Construct or Demolish This section is where the applicant describes PORT COLBORNE For use by Principal Authority the project/location. It is required that the Permit number (if different) address be properly identified in this Date received: Roll number section. It is also required to write the City of Port Colborne construction value estimate. Application submitted to: (Name of municipality upper-tier municipality, board of health or conservation authority A. Project information Lot/con Building number, street nan Unit numbe 123 Main St. E Municipality Postal code Plan number/other description L3K 1R8 Port Colborne Plan 1, Lot 1 Project value est. \$ Area of work (m² \$600,000 B. Purpose of application **B.** Purpose of Application Addition to an Conditional X Alteration/repair New construction Demolition Proposed use of building Current use of building This section describes the reason of the Residential Residential permit application with a "X" mark beside Description of proposed work the purpose. Also indicate the current and Renovate main and second floors proposed use of the building and a description of the work to be done. C. Applicant Applicant is: X Owner or Authorized agent of owner C. Applicant First name Corporation or partnership Smith John Street address Unit number Lot/con This section identifies who is applying for 123 Main St. E the permit and provides contact information Port Colborne jsmith@gmail.com L3K 1R8 Ontario Cell number Telephone number so that we may reach you (name, address 905-555-5555 and phone number). If an email and fax number are available, is to be shown.

D. Owner (if different from applicant)

If the applicant is not the owner of the building/property, it is required to give the contact information of the owner. This also requires the applicant to get authorization from the owner to apply for a permit. Please see the authorization form.

ast name	First name	Corporation or partnership				
Same as applicant						
Street address			Unit number	Lot/con.		
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail			
elephone number	Fax	Fax		Cell number		

E. Builder (optional)

This section is optional for when you know who the builder will be at the time of application.

F. Tarion Warranty Corporation (Ontario New Home Warranty Program)

This section is to be filled out if the proposed construction is a new home that is defined in the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. If the project is not a new home, check "No" and move onto section G.

G. Required Schedules

This section identifies the need to provide Schedule 1 and Schedule 2, this will be explained later in the guide.

H. Completeness and compliance with applicable law

A permit cannot be issued unless all the information that is required by the Ontario government is provided as part of the application. This section is a checklist that shows what is required. If an application is complete, the City will review the permit within the timelines. Timelines are not applicable to incomplete applications. A "Yes" indicates that the information that is required has been submitted.

H. Completeness and compliance with applicable law		
 This application meets all the requirements of clauses 1.3.1.3 (5) (a) to (d) of Division C of the Building Code (the application is made in the correct form and by the owner or authorized agent, all applicable fields have been completed on the application and required schedules, and all required schedules are submitted). 	Yes	No
Payment has been made of all fees that are required, under the applicable by-law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(c) of the <i>Building Code Act</i> , 1992, to be paid when the application is made.	Yes	No
 This application is accompanied by the plans and specifications prescribed by the applicable by-law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(b) of the Building Code Act, 1992. 	Yes	No
iii) This application is accompanied by the information and documents prescribed by the applicable by- law, resolution or regulation made under clause 7(1)(b) of the Building Code Act, 1992 which enable the chief building official to determine whether the proposed building, construction or demolition will contravene any applicable law.	Yes	No
iv) The proposed building, construction or demolition will not contravene any applicable law.	Yes	No

H. Sub-section i)

If a Yes is marked, it means that:

- Completed application form is submitted,
- Required Schedule 1 form is submitted,
- Authorization form, if applicable, is submitted,
- Fees have been paid.

H. Sub-section ii)

If a Yes is marked, it means that:

Required drawings are submitted.

H. Sub-section iii)

If a Yes is marked, it means that:

 Enough information is provided so that the city can determine if there are any applicable laws connected to the building/property.

H. Sub-section iv)

If a Yes is marked, it means that:

The proposed work will not contravene any other laws (also known as applicable laws).

SCHEDULE 1

The **Ontario Building Code** requires that all designs submitted as part of a permit application are done by a qualified person but there are exemptions (refer to the drawing section in the guide for more information). To identify who did the design, the Ontario government created a form called the Schedule 1: Designer Information.

Schedule 1: Designer Information

A completed Schedule 1 form is required as part of a permit application (a sewage system requires a Schedule 2 form). If a design can and has been done by a house owner, the owner is the designer and must fill out the Schedule 1 form. The house owner would declare that the work is exempt from registration since he/she is the property owner. For an application to be complete, the entire form must be filled.

For Section C, the designer has a Building Code Identification Number. The designer will check the boxes that apply to the project and they must be qualified to design.

*If you are the homeowner that completed your own drawings then leave this section blank.

For Section D, the designer is to complete this section with their qualifications.

*If you are the owner taking responsibility for the drawings, check the 3rd box and exemption for allowing the work is filled in as Owner.

A. Project Information	We did takes is	sponsibility for design activ			
Building number, street name			Unit no.	Lot/con.	
Municipality	Postal code	Plan number/ other descri	umber/ other description		
B. Individual who reviews and take	s responsibili	ty for design activities			
Name		Firm			
Street address			Unit no.	Lot/con.	
Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail		
Telephone number	Fax number		Cell number		
		and the second of the second	"."		
C. Design activities undertaken by i Division C1	individual idei	ntified in Section B. [B	uilding Code Ta	ble 3.5.2.1. of	
House	□HVAC	C – House	Building	Structural	
Small Buildings	Buildi	ng Services	Plumbii	ng – House	
Large Buildings		tion, Lighting and Power		ng – All Buildings	
Complex Buildings Description of designer's work	Fire P	rotection	On-site	Sewage Systems	
D. Declaration of Designer					
			declare that (choo	se one as appropriate	
D. Declaration of Designer (print name)	le)		declare that (choo	se one as appropriate	
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Schedule 1 is not required to be completed by a holder of a license, temporary license, or a certificate of practice, issued by the Ontario Association of Architects. Schedule 1 is also not required to be completed by a holder of a license to practise, a limited license to practise or a certificate of authorization, issued by the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario.

SCHEDULE 2

The **Ontario Building Code** requires that all sewage systems be installed by a qualified installer but there is an exemption. To identify who is installing the sewage system the Ontario government created a form called the Schedule 2: Sewage System Installer Information.

Schedule 2: Sewage System Installer	Schedule 2: Sewage System Installer Information						
Information	A. Project Information						
illorillation	Building number, street name			Unit number	Lot/con.		
A completed Schodule 2 form might be	Municipality	Postal code	Plan number/ other descr	iption			
A completed Schedule 2 form might be	B. Sewage system installer	•					
required as part of a sewage system permit	Is the installer of the sewage system eng- emptying sewage systems, in accordance	aged in the busine e with Building Co	ss of constructing on-site, i de Article 3.3.1.1, Division (C?			
application. Please contact Niagara Region	Yes (Continue to Section C)		ontinue to Section E)		unknown at time of ion (Continue to Section E)		
for further instructions.	C. Registered installer informatio Name	on (where answe	er to B is "Yes")	BCIN			
ioi futtici ilistructions.							
	Street address			Unit number	Lot/con.		
	Municipality	Postal code	Province	E-mail			
	Telephone number	Fax		Cell number			
	D. Qualified supervisor information	on (where answ	er to section R is "Ves"	")			
	Name of qualified supervisor(s) E. Declaration of Applicant:		Building Code Identification	(
	I (print name) I am the applicant for the permit submit a new Schedule 2 prior to OR I am the holder of the permit to c known. I certify that: 1. The information contained in this 2. If the owner is a corporation or p	construction whe	n the installer is known; ge system, and am submitti to the best of my knowledge	ing a new Schedule	2, now that the installer is		

For more information, please contact the Building Division at <u>buildingadmin@portcolborne.ca</u> or 905.835.2900.