

GENERAL INFORMATION

Why Are Building Permits and Inspections Required?

The City of Brentwood Building Section teams up with you, the owner/builder or contractor, to ensure all structures or work performed meets the standards set by the State adopted codes. These codes were created setting minimum life and safety standards on buildings where you live, work and play. The permitting and inspection process ensures the codes are met and your building is safe.

What Types of Work Require Building Permits?

Work on all structures (except those that are exempt) is required to be performed with a building permit. Most building construction, remodeling and repairs require building permits. Most electrical, mechanical and plumbing installations, repairs and replacements also require permits.

Some typical projects requiring permits:

- New homes and buildings
- Room additions, patio enclosures, and carports
- Decks and patio covers (attached or detached)
- Patio covers and arbors
- Garage conversions
- Storage sheds over 120 square feet
- Accessory structures of any size (not for storage purposes)
- Swimming pools and spas (in-ground & above-ground)
- Re-roofing
- Window and door installations or changes
- Water softeners, water heaters
- Landscape irrigation
- Shower/tub enclosure replacements
- New, relocated, or replacement electrical appliances, outlets, light switches, receptacles
- Fences over seven (7) feet high
- Fireplaces and fireplace inserts
- Skylights
- Retaining walls over four (4) feet high or walls with a surcharge

A building permit is not required for:

(WARNING: Although a permit may not be required, all construction must comply with building and planning code requirements and it is recommended that you obtain Planning Division approval before beginning any project (a plot plan may be required.))

- One-story detached accessory structure, providing the square footage does not exceed 120 square feet (Specific Zoning Code Requirements)
- Fences not exceeding seven (7) feet high
- Retaining walls not over four (4) feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids.
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
- Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one-and two-family dwellings.
- Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5'-9" in height.

Where do my Fees go? What are the Costs?

The Building Section is supported by fees collected for services. Plan review fees pay for staff or outside consultant time to perform plan checks for code compliance. Permit fees pay for inspection services. Administrative costs are included in the building and plan check fees. All fees are identified in the City of Brentwood's Cost Allocation Plan and are available for your review.

Building permit fees, and any required plan check fees, are based on the value of the project. Electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permit fees are based on the types and quantities of items to be evaluated. Square foot unit costs are also used in accessing fees.

Additional fees may be assessed for supplemental plan check; additional work not specified at the time of permit issuance, such as grading or encroachment permits; and/or any applicable construction taxes and/or school district fees (payable to Brentwood Union School District and Liberty Union High School District).

BUILDING PERMIT INFORMATION

Obtaining Building Permits

Please submit the application, plans (if required) and pay plan check fees. A building permit is issued upon the approval of the application and payment of building permit fees and other applicable fees.

APPLICABLE CODES AS OF JANUARY 1, 2026

- 2025 California Building Code (CBC)
- 2025 California Residential Code (CRC)
- 2025 California Plumbing Code (CPC)
- 2025 California Mechanical Code (CMC)
- 2025 California Electrical Code (CEC)
- 2025 California Green Building Standards Code (CalGreen)
- 2025 California Energy Code (Title 24)
- Brentwood Municipal Code

BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A building permit application requires:

- Description of the work.
- Legal address of the project.
- Owner's name and telephone number.
- Applicant's name, address, telephone number, and signature. (Applicant must be the owner; the owner's authorized agent or the contractor.)
- Contractors, architect's and/or engineer's name, license number, address, and telephone number (if applicable).
- Completion of the "Owner-Builder Declaration," or the "Licensed Contractors Declaration" and the "Worker's Compensation Declaration."
- Valuation of the proposed work (including materials and labor).
- Plans, if required - Three (3) copies of plans and two (2) copies of calculations and specifications.
- Planning Division Approval
- Most building permit applications are reviewed by the Planning Division for compliance with zoning regulations such as use, property line setback and height requirements.

Plan Information

Plans, if required in order to show code compliance, must be clear and drawn to scale. They may be prepared by the owner, an architect, engineer, draftsman or designer. A licensed California architect or engineer may be required to prepare plans for certain locations or for unusual structural conditions.

Some or all of the following plans and information may be required:

- Plot Plan showing property dimensions, location of all existing and proposed structures on the property with distances from other buildings and property lines.
- Floor Plan(s) showing room size and uses, placement of walls, location and sizes of windows, doors and stairs, fixtures, electrical and light outlet, fireplaces and cabinets.
- Exterior Elevations showing all sides of the building being constructed or remodeled and indicating the height of the structure and the exterior materials being used.
- Structural plans including: Foundation, Floor Framing, Roof Framing, Cross Sections, Framing Details
- Structural calculations if required.
- Energy compliance demonstration if the area of conditioned space is increased.

Product "listing" numbers provided by an approved testing agency such as UL, ICBO, IAPMO, AGA, etc., for some products and materials, such as roofing, skylights, spas, fireplaces and fireplace inserts.

How long are Plan Checks and Permits valid for?

Plan Checks are valid for six months from the date of approval. After this time the plan check will expire if the building permit has not been issued. A one-time six-month extension may be granted if written request is received before the expiration date.

Permits are valid for one year from the date of issue or the last inspection. After this time the building permit will automatically expire. A one-time six-month extension may be granted if written request is received before the expiration date.

EXPIRED PERMITS AND WORK DONE WITHOUT PERMITS

Expired Permits:

The City of Brentwood may reissue permits if the work authorized by the original permit has begun, but the permit under which the work was conducted has expired. Requests for reissuance must be submitted in writing. The request must come from either the original applicant or the current owner of the affected property.

The reissued permit may be valid for a period of up to 365 days from the date of reissuance.

Per the City's Cost Allocation Plan, the permit reissuance fee is one-half of the permit issuance fees in effect at the time that the permit is reissued.

Permitting Work Previously Done without Permits:

The project must be treated as a new project, including submitting plans, obtaining planning and building approval, paying current fees, and verifying through inspections that the work complies with current codes.

Penalties for Work Done Without Permits:

Special investigation fees, equal to and in addition to the regular permit fees, may be charged for work commenced without the required permits.

How long is a permit valid?

Every permit issued shall become invalid unless the work has commenced within 365 days after issuance.

How do I schedule an inspection?

You may schedule an inspection by the automated voice permit system (925) 809-7930.

How can I request an a.m. or p.m. inspection?

The automated voice permit system will offer this option.

Do I need a permit for a spa if it is portable?

A portable spa will require an electrical permit. An approved barrier will also be required.

Do I need a permit for my patio cover if it is detached from the house?

Yes, all structures unless exempt must have a building permit. Patio covers are not exempt from a building permit.

How deep does an electrical, gas, water or drain line need to be buried?

- A safe answer would be, the top of gas and electrical lines need to be 18 inches below finish grade, and water and sewer lines must be 12 inches below finish grade.
- Under specific conditions, the gas and electrical lines can be buried at a lower depth.

Do I need to be home for an inspection?

For interior inspections of an occupied dwelling, an adult at least 18 years of age must be present. For exterior inspections, such as for sheds or pools, a letter authorizing access must be posted on the gate to the rear yard.

This brochure is designed to supply general information only. Please be advised that the process and timelines herein are guidelines, and may differ from project to project.