



Homeowner's Building Permit Guide

City of Indianapolis and Marion County
Department of Business and Neighborhood Services

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Introduction

This manual is designed for the Indianapolis homeowner. It is intended to:

- Identify work that requires a permit.
- Provide the requirements for obtaining building permits.
- Provide examples of plans and details that will aid in project completion and code compliance.
- Inform the homeowner of the requirements that must be met by them or contractors depending on who is performing the work.
- Answer some of the most commonly asked building code and compliance questions.

Unless noted, all references in the document use the 2020 Indiana Residential Code. Indiana Residential Code can be found on the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Website.

The zoning ordinance can be found at [https://library.municode.com/in/indianapolis_-_marion_county/codes/code_of_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/in/indianapolis/_marion_county/codes/code_of_ordinances)

It is the responsibility of the homeowner to locate the property lines and have all underground utilities located. Prior to construction, please call 811 to locate all underground utilities.

Individual handouts referenced in this manual can be accessed at: www.indy.gov/bns

Note: If your home is in a subdivision with a homeowner's association, the plans may require approval by the association before applying to the City for a building permit.

Obtaining Building Permits

The Department of Business and Neighborhood Services is located at 1200 S Madison Ave, Indianapolis, Suite 100. Any construction requiring a building permit also requires that the applicant either be a licensed contractor in Marion county, or the property owner. Depending on the permit type, there may be additional restrictions.

Depending on the project, there may be multiple permits required. Please see the information below to determine what permits are applicable for your project.

Questions relating to residential permits should be directed to (317) 327-8700 or PermitQuestions@indy.gov.

Residential Permits

There are many permits that are typically required during construction, including Improvement Location, Structural, Drainage, Driveway, Electrical, Wrecking, Plumbing, HVAC, and potentially a Flood Permit.

The following permit types are issued by Permit Issuance. They can be contacted at (317) 327-7800 or PermitQuestions@indy.gov.

Improvement Location Permit: Required for increasing square footage or height of an existing structure, or proposing a new structure and all other site improvements unless otherwise exempt per Sec. 740-801.A of Indy Rezone. An Improvement Location permit can be issued to any applicant.

The basic plan requirements are listed below:

1. Two copies of the site plan (plot plan/survey).
2. The site plan must be drawn to a scale of 1"=30' or larger. For unusually large lots, a scale of 1"=40' is permissible. Indicate the scale used on the site plan. The following must also be shown on each copy:
 - a) The direction north (shown by an arrow).
 - b) Subdivision name, section number, and lot number. For a lot not located in a subdivision, a copy of the metes and bounds legal description must be attached to or incorporated with the plot plan.
 - c) Address of the site as assigned by a recorded plat or by the BNS Address Technician (Department of Business and Neighborhood Services, 1200 Madison Av., Suite 100)
 - d) The overall site and dimensions thereof.
 - e) Names, locations, and dimensions of all right-of-way, streets, alleys, and easements.
 - f) Names of any legal ditches or streams on or adjacent to the lot.
 - g) Location and horizontal dimensions of all structures, both proposed and existing.
 - h) All dimensions of any attached garage, porch, deck, fireplace, bay or box windows, second floor cantilevers, etc.
 - i) Use of each structure by labeling (e.g. existing residence, proposed attached garage, pool, covered porch, deck, storage shed, etc.).
 - j) Proposed structures indicated by cross-hatching, i.e. /////.
 - k) Structures to be removed indicated by broken lines, i.e. -----.
 - l) Distances from front, rear, and each side property line to all structures, both proposed and existing. The distance is measured from the point where the measurement must form a right angle with the property line.
 - m) Location of the proposed or existing driveway and its width at the right-of-way (property) line. Also, show the driveway connection to the street or alley.
 - n) Location and dimension of any other paved areas.
 - o) Tank location and finger system of septic system, if applicable.

For further information, please contact: PermitQuestions@indy.gov or (317) 327-7800.

Structural Permit: Required when alterations are occurring to an existing structure, proposing a new structure and all other structural alterations unless otherwise exempt per Sec. 536-201 of the City of Indianapolis Building Standards and Procedures. A Structural Permit requires the applicant to either be a licensed contractor or the property owner if they are completing the work themselves. If a property owner is pulling the permit, they must complete and sign a Statement of Intent and Understanding.

The basic plan requirements are listed below:

1. Two sets of construction plans are required for a structural permit. For a detailed list of information required on building plans, please refer to the applicable "Example Packet" of plans. The plans should include
2. Elevation drawings of all sides of construction.
3. Foundation plan.
4. Floor plan(s).
5. Cross-Section/Details.
6. Indiana Residential Energy Code compliance pathway selection:
 - a. Prescriptive pathway – Only plans required
 - b. Total UA Alternative pathway – Plans and completed Rescheck report required
 - c. Performance pathway – Plans and completed software report – REM/Design, REM/Rate, or Energy Gauge

Wrecking Permit: Required when removing or dismantling a structure or portions of a structure. A Wrecking Permit has many requirements to determine who may pull a permit. These can be found in Sec. 875-401 of the City of Indianapolis Building Standards and Procedures.

Electrical, Plumbing and HVAC: Required unless specifically exempted by Sec. 536-201 of the City of Indianapolis Building Standards and Procedures. These must be pulled by a licensed contractor in each craft.

The following permit types are issued by Infrastructure. They can be contacted at 317-327-8583 or Infrastructure@indy.gov.

Drainage: Required when altering the flow of water. Per Development Guidelines Sec. 561-225. The basic plan requirements are below:

1. If the lot is in a floodway or floodplain, a Professional Engineer, Land Surveyor, or Architect must certify the site plan.
2. Provide existing and proposed grading showing drainage by contouring or sufficient spot elevations.
3. Provide locations of all existing or proposed swales, ditches, culverts, drainage channels, surface / subsurface drainage devices and the direction of flow.
4. Location of all drainage pipes on or adjacent to the lot. Indicate size, type, gauge, slope, and invert elevations.
5. Indicate the type and location of the proposed erosion control device(s).

Driveway: Required when creating a driveway cut in the city owned right of way. A Driveway Permit must be pulled by a licensed contractor.

The basic plan requirements are below:

1. If a driveway is to be constructed, changed, or repaired within the right-of-way, the person responsible for the construction must be a listed contractor with the Department of Business and Neighborhood Services. Each site plan must also show:
2. Proposed access width
3. Measurement of a curb radius or tapers.
4. Culvert pipe under the driveway, if needed. Indicate size, type, gauge, and slope of pipe and its invert elevations.

Flood: Required when performing any structural work or land alteration in a flood zone.

Contractors

If hiring a contractor to complete construction activity, the contractor must pull all required permits using her or his license. The applicant of the permit is responsible for all fees and violations in the field. By having the contractor performing the work pull the permit, the homeowner is protected from any violations or fees.

Before hiring a contractor, verify that they are licensed and has the required general liability insurance coverage, surety bond, and workman's compensation coverage or waiver.

All contractors must be licensed and secure required permits to perform any work. If you hire an unlicensed contractor, you will be responsible for costly repairs or held liable for personal injury/property damage. If you suspect an unlicensed contractor or non-permitted work, call the Mayor's Action Center at 317.327.4622.

A list of licensed contractors can be found on our website at:

<https://www.indy.gov/activity/licensed-contractors>

For more information, please contact Contractors@indy.gov.

Application

Once an application is submitted, it must be reviewed by the Department of Business and Neighborhood Services for code compliance. Please refer to the Residential Plan Checklist to see all submittal requirements. Application submission will require two (2) sets of detailed plans that include but are not limited to the following:

- A completed Residential Plan Submittal Checklist
- Plot or Site plan, which must show property lines, all buildings on the lot and dimensions from any new structures to related property lines.
- Foundation Plan, Floor Plan, Framing Plan and Building Elevations.
- Sections and/or Details showing but not limited to; footing information, wall and roof information, truss calculations, and all materials to be used.
- Additional items may be required for review based on project specific conditions.

The applicant will be notified by email when plan reviews are complete. Please arrange to have a contact person, telephone and email listed on the application. Comments are available on line at: <https://accela9ca.indy.gov/citizenaccess/>, by searching the permit numbers.

The permits will be issued when approved by each division (Infrastructure, Permit Issuance). If the building permit is not issued within six (6) months from the date of submission, the application will be abandoned.

Once a permit is issued, a copy of the permit must be displayed in a way that it is visible from the street. Typically the permit is placed on a window or door facing the street. In order to close a structural permit, a Certificate of Completion and Compliance must be submitted to our office to CompletionCards@indy.gov or dropped off in our lobby.

The Certificate of Completion and Compliance is the third page of the issued permit.

If the certificate is not returned to our office and the permit expires, there will be administrative fees assessed monthly until the certificate is returned.

Fees

Permit and plan review fees are determined by either a flat rate, or based on square footage depending on the permit type. Please see the summary of most common permits below.

All permits are assessed an application fee of \$32.00 in addition to the permit fee. All structural permits except for structural renovation permits also have a plan review fee.

DRAINAGE PERMIT

Addition to Residential Structure/Detached Accessory Structure: \$ 121.00

New Structure in an Approved Subdivision: \$ 78.00

New Structure in a Subdivision Platted Prior to 1980 or by Metes and Bounds: \$ 182.00

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

Single-family accessory buildings, additions, and craft permits: \$117.00

New single-family construction: \$183.00

DRIVEWAY PERMIT

Residential Driveway (each access): \$141.00

IMPROVEMENT LOCATION PERMIT

New Primary Structure:

Platted Subdivision: \$156.00

Metes and Bounds: \$199.00

New Addition or Accessory Structure: \$108.00

STRUCTURAL PERMIT

Structural Plan Review Fee: 1000 sf or less \$85.00, plus \$21.00 per 500 sf over 1,000 sf

New Primary Structures Permit Fee: \$217.00, plus \$23.00 per 500 sf over 1,000 sf New

Accessory Structures: \$42.00 (1sf – 200 sf)

\$193.00 (201 sf – 1,000 sf)

\$23.00 (per 500 sf over 1,000)

Addition and Remodel, Primary Structure Permit Fee: \$217.00, plus \$23.00 per 500 sf over

1,000 sf Addition and Remodel, Accessory Structure Permit Fee: \$193.00, plus \$23.00 per 500 sf over 1,000 sf

Remodel Permit Fee: \$159.00, plus \$39.00 per 500 sf over

1,000 sf Miscellaneous Renovation Permit Fee: \$141.00

A complete fee schedule can be found on our website at:

<https://www.indy.gov/activity/license-and-permit-fees>

Adopted Codes

The following codes are minimum standards and are to be used as a base guideline for building construction.

- 2020 International Residential Code (IRC)

Table 301.2(1)				Subject to Damage From						
Ground Snow Load	Wind Speed (MPH)	Decay	Seismic Design Category	Weathering	Frost Line Depth	Termite	Winter Design Temp	Ice Shield Under- Layment	Air Freezing Index	Mean Annual Temp
20	115	Slight to Moderate	B	Severe	30"	Moderate to Heavy	2° F	No	≤1500	51.8

Work Exempt from Permitting

A permit will not be required for the following one or two-family dwellings (Class 2):

(1) Replacement of exterior prime doors and windows (limited to like-for-like in a wall opening of the same dimensions which does not reduce the egress required by code provision existing at the time the building was constructed) if performed by a listed contractor that complies with the notice and posting requirements of section 536-216; Or a person who owns or is purchasing a Class 2 structure on contract with intention to utilize the property for his or her own occupancy;

(2) Replacement of an existing roof, if performed by a listed contractor that complies with the notice and posting requirements of section 536-216; and that construction does not involve:

- a. A change in roof configuration; or
- b. A change in type of roof covering (e.g., tile roofing replacing asphalt shingles) that would increase the dead load on the structure; or
- c. The replacement of basic structural members that support the roof (e.g., replacement of a rafter or more than 128 feet of decking); or
- d. The installation of heat-applied roofing material.

Also, a person who owns or is purchasing a Class 2 structure on contract with the intention to utilize the property for his or her own occupancy may affix without permit a layer of replacement shingles to a single layer of existing shingles provided that a layer of shingles is not removed and provided that the total shingle-roof application is performed by the owner or contract purchaser with assistance only by non compensated volunteers;

(3) Installation and replacement of exterior siding if performed by a listed contractor that complies with the notice and posting requirements of section 536-216; additionally, a person

who owns or is purchasing a Class 2 structure on contract with the intention to utilize the property for his or her own occupancy may attach without permit a layer of siding to the existing sheathing without removal of existing sheathing, provided that the total siding application is performed by the owner or contract purchaser assisted only by no compensated volunteers;

(4) Ordinary maintenance and repair of a structure where the work does not reduce performance or create additional health or safety risks as defined in section 536-111(i);

(5) Installation and replacement of fixtures attached to the walls or floors such as cupboards, cabinets, shelving, railings, tracks, wall and floor coverings, and doors;

(6) Installation, maintenance and repair of storm windows and other exterior windows designed and used as protection against severe weather;

(7) Exterior repair or renovation of a masonry chimney above the roof line that does not reduce the size of the flue opening;

(8) Gutter replacement or installation;

(9) Attachment of window awnings to exterior walls where the awnings project not more than forty-eight (48) inches from any wall;

(10) Installation of thermal insulation;

(11) Installation of additional non-load bearing walls that do not result in the creation of sleeping rooms; provided however, permits are required (except as otherwise specifically exempted by provisions of this section) for electrical, heating and cooling, or plumbing work;

(12) Replacement of an attic fan, bathroom exhaust fan, range hood exhaust fan or whole house fan;

(13) Erection or installation of a fence or structural barrier in conformance with zoning requirements and any necessary certificates of appropriateness in a historic district;

(14) Erection or installation of an aboveground swimming pool thirty (30) inches or less deep and fifteen (15) feet or less at its widest points;

(15) Erection or installation of a deck where:

a. No part of the floor is more than thirty (30) inches above finished grade; and

b. There is compliance with the assessor notification requirements of section 536-215;

(16) Erection of retaining walls which are not over four (4) feet in height measured from the lowest finished grade to the top of the wall, unless the walls are supporting a surcharge;

(17) Erection of a structure which spans one hundred twenty (120) square feet or less of base area, is less than fifteen (15) feet in height, is not placed on or attached to a permanent foundation and does not contain an electrical power distribution system, heating system, space heating equipment, cooling system, or space cooling equipment;

(18) Ordinary maintenance and repair of building equipment where the work does not reduce performance or create additional safety or health risks;

(19) Installation of a single-phase electric circuit not exceeding sixty (60) amperes at a nominal 120/240 volts which involves the installation, modernization, replacement, service or repair of a heating system, space heating equipment, cooling system, space cooling equipment, a water heater or a food waste disposer for which a building permit has been issued;

(20) Installation of household appliances such as window air conditioners, refrigerators, refrigerators with automatic icemakers, ranges, microwave ovens, clothes washers, clothes dryers, dishwashers, food waste disposers and trash compactors when such installation does not include the installation of an electrical circuit;

(21) Replacement in kind of piping in a plumbing system when the replacement piping meets the same performance specifications and has the same capacity as the piping being replaced and not more than twenty (20) percent of all piping in the structure is replaced;

(22) Replacement of appliances, fixtures, traps and valves in a plumbing system;

(23) Replacement of a water heater with one (1) that is identical as to venting arrangement and type of fuel or energy input;

(24) Extension of heating or cooling duct work;

(25) Placement of a manufactured home not on a permanent foundation in a manufactured home park licensed by the Indiana State Department of Health;

(26) Initial connection or reconnection of plumbing to a manufactured home not placed on a permanent foundation located in a manufactured home park licensed by the Indiana State Department of Health;

(27) Erection of real estate signs advertising real estate for sale or for rent in conformance with the size limitations of the zoning ordinance governing signs;

(28) Connection, provision or use of temporary electrical power for on-site construction

Unless otherwise exempted, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits will be required for the above exempted items.

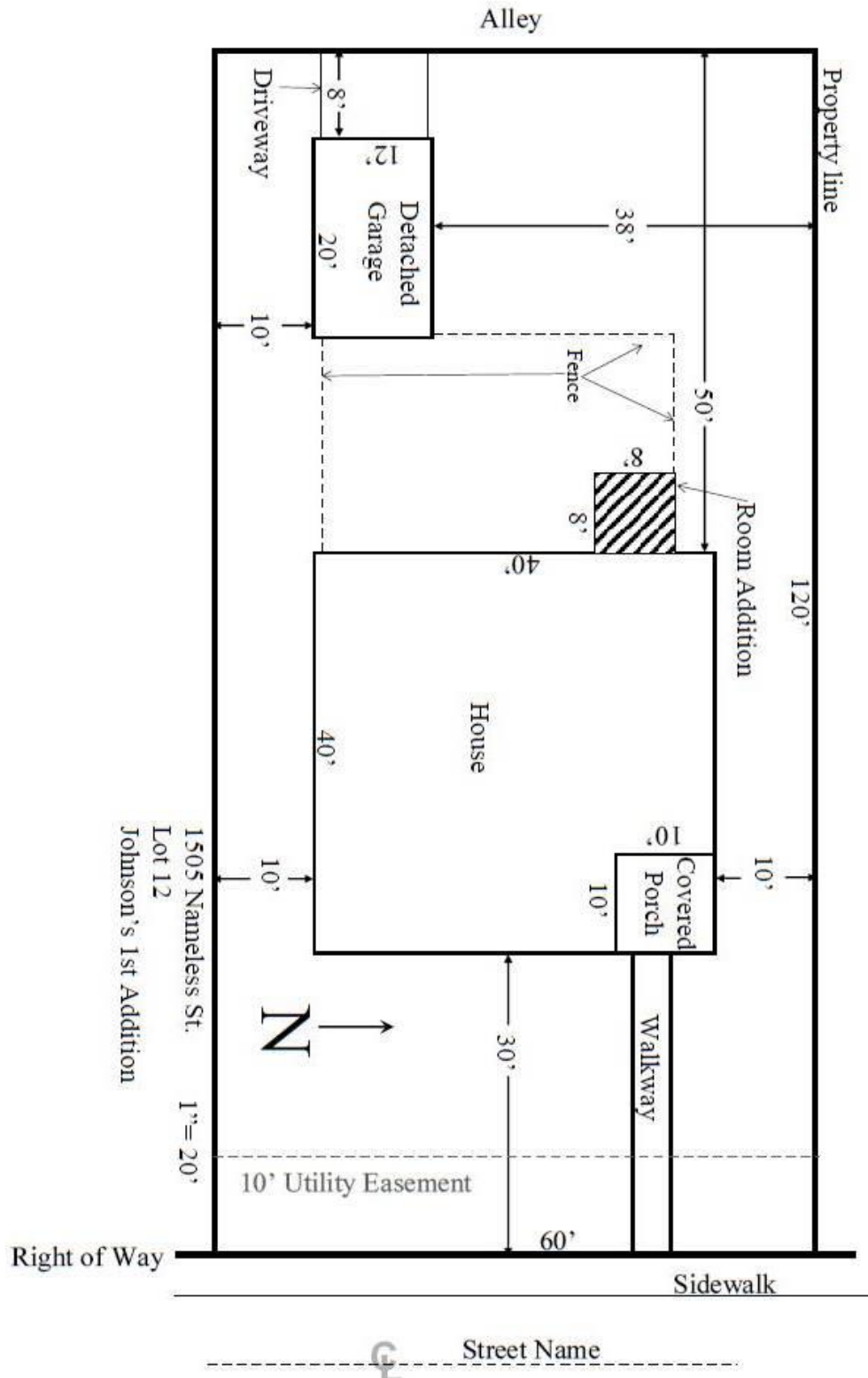
Site Plan

Every Improvement Location, Drainage, Flood and Driveway Permit requires a site plan, also known as a plot plan. You may view an aerial photograph to assist with drawing the layout of the home and all buildings, structures and pools on the property at: <http://maps.indy.gov/MapIndy/index.html>. However, an aerial photograph is not acceptable in lieu of a site plan.

A Site Plan is a drawing of the lot showing the following information:

- The direction north (shown by an arrow).
- Subdivision name, section number, and lot number. For a lot not located in a subdivision, a copy of the metes and bounds legal description must be attached to or incorporated with the plot plan.
- Address of the site as assigned by a recorded plat or by the BNS Address Technician
- The overall site and dimensions.
- Names, locations, and dimensions of all right-of-way, streets, alleys, and easements.
- Names of any legal ditches or streams on or adjacent to the lot.
- Location and horizontal dimensions of all structures, both proposed and existing.
- Use of each structure by labeling (e.g. existing residence, proposed attached garage, pool, covered porch, deck, storage shed, etc.).
- Distances from front, rear, and each side property line to all structures, both proposed and existing. The distance is measured from the point where the measurement must form a right angle with the property line.
- Location of the proposed or existing driveway and its width at the right-of-way (property) line. Also, show the driveway connection to the street or alley.
- Location and dimension of any other paved areas.
- Tank location and finger system of septic system, if applicable.

The following illustration is a sample of a Plot/Site Plan



Common Projects

New Structures

A new structure requires an Improvement Location, Drainage, and Structural Permit. Please reference the residential plan submittal checklist for a full list of required documentation. The Residential Development application should be used when applying for a new structure.

Prior to submitting for a permit, please reference Indy Rezone in order to assist in planning your project to verify that applicable zoning standards are met such as setbacks and open space requirements.

Construction cannot begin until the Structural permit is issued. The permit hierarchy is as follows, the drainage Permit must be issued before the Improvement Location Permit and the Improvement Location Permit must be issued prior to the issuance of the Structural Permit.

If a sewer connection is planned for new construction, the applicant must obtain a Sewer connection permit prior to issuance of the Structural permit. Sewer permits can be obtained through Citizens Energy Group. Contact CEG at 317-927-4328 or their website for more details. www.citizensenergygroup.com

If a septic system will be installed or relocated on the lot, the applicant must obtain a Septic permit prior to applying for an Improvement Location Permit. For a Septic Permit contact: Health and Hospital Corporation, 3838 N. Rural St. (317) 221-2147.

If you plan to use engineered roof trusses on your project, you must submit sealed, engineered roof truss packet with your permit application.

Electrical, Plumbing and HVAC Permits

Homeowners may take an exam which upon passing will allow the homeowner to apply for the applicable permit. Otherwise a licensed electrician or mechanical contractor must pull the required permits.

Homeowners can pull plumbing permits in limited situations. Please email PermitQuestions@indy.gov with project specific information to determine if a property owner can pull a plumbing permit.

For more information on the homeowner exam, please contact Contractor@indy.gov.

Porches and Carports

Prior to submitting for a permit, please consult with the Zoning Department for zoning restrictions and minimum building setback requirements for adding a porch or carport to a residence.

If a carport is prefabricated, the plans will need to be sealed by a design professional licensed in the state of Indiana.

Posts for porches and carports will require footings. These footings must meet the requirements of Table R403.2 Size of Footings Supporting Piers and Columns.

Rafters and beams must be sized to carry the calculated roof loads.

A transfer of design loads must be clearly indicated from the roof to the foundation by including a cross section of the proposed porch or carport.

If you plan to use engineered roof trusses on your project, you must submit sealed engineered roof truss packet with your permit application.

Please see the example packets on our website: <https://www.indy.gov/activity/residential-development-permits>

Storage Sheds, Gazebos, Detached Buildings, Pools and Accessory Structures

Prior to submitting for permit, determine zoning requirements for your zoning district. For detached buildings and structures such as storage shed, open-air gazebos, and other accessory buildings, compliance with a property's zoning district is required including minimum building setbacks and maximum lot coverage as applicable. The zoning requirements can be found in Indy Rezone.

A shed that is 120 sf or less, less than 15' in height, and is not on a permanent foundation and has no utility connection does not require a permit. Between 121 square feet and 200 square feet, only a Structural and a Drainage Permit are required. Over 200 square feet, a Structural, Improvement Location and Drainage permit are required. Please note if a parcel is in a flood zone, a flood permit is required for all construction projects.

If you plan to use engineered roof trusses on your project, you must submit sealed engineered roof truss packet with your permit application.

If applying for permits for a pool specifically, please provide information on the safety measures. For example, indicate if the pool will have a safety cover or if a fence will surround the pool. If providing a fence, please provide the height of the fence and indicate the location on the site plan.

Remodeling

A permit is needed for all remodeling unless otherwise exempt in the Building Standards and Procedures. Please see the Residential Plan Submittal Checklist for a list of required plans. The applicant should complete the Structural Permit Application.

The basic element required for all remodel permits is a scaled, complete floor plan of every floor where construction is occurring. This floor plan must also include a clear legend that clearly identifies the scope of work.

If you plan to use engineered roof trusses on your project, you must submit sealed engineered roof truss packet with your permit application.

See Remodel Example Packet: <https://www.indy.gov/activity/residential-development-permits>

Re-Roofing, Siding

Re-roofing and replacing siding will require a permit. A re-roofing permit may be obtained by applying online on the Citizen's Access Portal, or applying in person at our office. The applicant should complete the Structural Permit Application.

If no structural changes are occurring, the structural permit will be a Structural Renovation Permit and will not require any plans for review.

Room Addition

A room addition requires an Improvement Location, Structural, and Drainage permit as well as a Flood permit if applicable. Prior to submitting for permit, determine zoning requirements for your zoning district. For additions, compliance with a property's zoning district is required including minimum building setbacks and maximum lot coverage as applicable. The zoning requirements can be found in Indy Rezone.

To obtain a building permit, please Provide all documents listed in the Residential Plan Submittal Checklist

If you plan to use engineered roof trusses on your project, you must submit sealed engineered roof truss packet with your permit application.

See Addition Example Packet: <https://www.indy.gov/activity/residential-development-permits>

Variances

If a proposed project does not meet the requirements of Indy Rezone, you may apply for a variance through the Department of Metropolitan Development, Current Planning. Current Planning is located in the city county building at 200 E Washington, Indianapolis IN. They can be reached at 317-237-5155 or PlannerOnCall@indy.gov for more information.

Current Planning Website: <https://www.indy.gov/activity/zoning-variance-and-land-use-petitions-general-information>

Inspections

All work must be inspected during the construction process. You may schedule inspections by calling 317-327-5525. This is an automated line and will instruct you to use your permit number to schedule the desired inspection. Any questions regarding inspections should be directed to 317-327-8939 or BNS.ConstructionServices@indy.gov.

Before calling you will need:

- Your Permit number
- Type of inspection
- Address

Construction Services does offer scheduled and same day inspections for an additional fee. For more information, please contact 317-327-8938.

Required Inspections

After permits are issued, inspections are required throughout the construction process to verify that the construction in the field mirrors the approved plans and is consistent with the building code and zoning ordinance.

From the moment an inspection is called in, the inspector will be out to the site within 48 business hours. The site must be open and accessible for the inspection to occur. The only exception is that a footing inspection will occur within 2 business hours. If you would like to schedule a specific time, you may do so for an additional fee. Contact Construction Services for more information.

the final inspection is scheduled after the Certificate of Completion and Compliance is submitted.

Once an inspection has occurred, the result of the inspection will be emailed to the applicant of the permit and recorded on the Citizen's Access Portal.

Required Items at Site:

- The released set of plans with a stamp from the permit office.

The following list is the required inspections. Additional inspections may be required based on the individual projects. For specific questions, please contact the inspector for your district.

Structural Inspections

- Foundation/Footing Inspection
- Framing Inspection (The framing inspection must occur after the craft permit rough ins or at the same time.)
- Final Inspection

Plumbing Inspections

- Under Slab Inspection
- Rough-In Inspection
- Final Inspection

Mechanical Inspections

- Rough-In Inspection
- Final Inspection

Electrical Inspections

- Under Slab Inspection
- Rough-In Inspection
- Final Inspection