



### Permit & Development Center

809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202 | (414) 286-8210 | [milwaukee.gov/permits](http://milwaukee.gov/permits) | [DevelopmentCenterInfo@milwaukee.gov](mailto:DevelopmentCenterInfo@milwaukee.gov)

Most home remodeling projects require plans submitted to the City of Milwaukee Development Center before a permit can be issued. Plans will be examined by a plan examiner to ensure they conform to the State of Wisconsin building code and the City of Milwaukee building and zoning code (MCO). For homes built prior to 1980, the SE Wisconsin Alterations and Remodeling Guidelines may be used. The Development Center is located at 809 N. Broadway, 1st floor.

#### Plan evaluation

Here are some of the items the plan examiner looks for when evaluating plans for residential remodeling:

- There must be two legal exits from each floor. Second floor alterations in single-family houses can typically use adequately sized windows as a second exit, while third floor attics require two exits by means of two distinct stairs that comply with the building code. See the Wisconsin building code and MCO 240-22 for details.
- 50% of the floor space in the remodeled rooms must have ceilings at least 7'-0" high. Windows must be sized in proportion to the size of the room to provide adequate natural light and ventilation.
- Existing floor structure must be sufficient to support the new rooms and may need to be reinforced.
- New stairs must have headroom clearance of at least 76".

#### Permit and fees

Building permits for remodeling a one or two-family home must be issued to either the homeowner performing work on their own residence or a contractor licensed by the State of Wisconsin and the City.

You will be charged a fee for the plan examination, and a fee for the building permit. Permit fees are based on the cost of materials and labor to build the project, excluding the cost of HVAC, electrical, plumbing, furniture, equipment and decorating cost.

#### Submitting plans

Plans may be submitted in person or online. Online submissions may be done through Milwaukee's Land Management System (LMS) at [city.milwaukee.gov/LMS](http://city.milwaukee.gov/LMS). Once on the site, you can create an account or login to apply for your permit. To apply in person, you need to bring three (3) copies of the plans for the project to the Development Center. The plans must:

- Be drawn to scale.
- Show the location and size of the rooms involved.
- Show the size and location of doors, windows and ceiling heights.
- Show tread and riser dimensions, headroom clearance, and handrails of any new stairs.
- Label how the rooms will be used (bedroom, office, etc.).

Alterations to existing homes, regardless of how minor they may appear, often involve a variety of building code issues. If the area being remodeled is less than 400 square feet, you may walk in and speak with a plan examiner specialist. If the area being remodeled is more than 400 square feet, submission is required and an appointment to have the plans for the project reviewed is recommended. To make an appointment, call (414) 286-8210 or visit our [QLess system online](#) to make a "Complex Plan Review Appointment".

#### Inspections

When your permit is issued, you'll be instructed how and when to call a building inspector, who will look at the work at various stages of completion.

#### Associated permits

A licensed electrician must obtain electrical permits if the project involves electrical work. If a bathroom or kitchen is installed, the homeowner or a licensed plumber must obtain plumbing permits.

If your remodeling affects the exterior of your home, and your home is located in a locally-designated historic district, you must receive a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission before the permit can be issued.