

City of Knoxville
Plans Review & Inspections Division
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. Do I need a permit to build a shed/storage building on my property?

Yes. You will need to submit a plot plan that shows the dimensions of the lot, all existing structures, the size of the structure and the setbacks. This will require a limited review and a permit may be issued the same day.

2. What permits are required for condemned houses?

A building permit is required to bring the condemned structure into compliance. Licensed contractors are required to obtain the proper permits for any plumbing, electrical or HVAC work to be done.

3. How do I request an inspection?

You may schedule an inspection, cancel an inspection, obtain inspection results or check on the status of your plans review by calling the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 865-215-4830. You will need your six-digit permit/plan number to access the system.

4. How can I verify whether my inspection passed or failed?

A “green” tag signifies Passed and a “red” tag signifies Failed. The Inspector is required to leave a tag when the inspection is complete. If you have further questions, you may contact the Inspector in the office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. by calling their direct office number. You may also obtain your inspection results by calling the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 865-215-4830.

5. Do I need to submit plans to get a building permit for my business?

For commercial buildings, any structural work or sub work being done requires a plans review including any new construction, interior alterations, additions, or change of occupancy.

6. Is my building permit ready for pick up?

If the status of your plans review is approved (via the IVR system or a Plans Review letter received from our office) then your permit is ready for pickup. The appropriate plans review fee is due at the time of issuance and may include an Engineering fee. Also, for work valued over \$25,000, a licensed contractor and a copy of the Workers Compensation Certificate of Liability Insurance is required.

7. Can I obtain a homeowner's permit for work that I am doing myself?

Yes. A homeowner may obtain a building permit for his or her own home; however, in order to perform plumbing, electrical or HVAC work, they must live in the home, own the home and do the work themselves. It has to be their primary place of residence and proof of ownership may be required.

8. How may I file a complaint regarding work being done without a permit?

To register a complaint with our office, we need a valid address and a detailed description of the complaint. You may wish to remain anonymous; however, once entered this information becomes public record. Please allow up to three business days for complaints to be inspected.

9. Based on my current zoning, can I open a business at that location?

The City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance contains provisions that regulate the zoning district in which businesses may be located and operated. For an official interpretation of this ordinance you may contact our office at 865-215-2999.

10. What are the restrictions to installing a fence on my property?

A permit is not required to install a fence; however, privacy fences cannot exceed 42 inches in height in the required front yard, typically 25 feet from the front property line. There is no height limit for side or rear yards, nor for fences that do not impede vision across the lot. Fences are allowed on the property lines but can not encroach beyond the property line. Fences in the visibility triangle may not impede vision across the lot.