



GENERAL BUILDING PERMIT INFORMATION FOR:  
**RESIDENTIAL  
ALTERATIONS & ADDITIONS**

INFORMATION  
GUIDELINE

**1**

Jan 2017

CITY OF ESCONDIDO • BUILDING DIVISION • 201 N. BROADWAY, ESCONDIDO, CA 92025 • (760) 839-4647

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This information provides general guidelines for homeowners and/or contractors in obtaining permits and the necessary inspections. It is not intended to be specific for individual projects. Separate guidelines for specific projects are also available for your use, i.e., patio covers, decks, retaining walls, fences, plot plans, etc. When planning a project, you should call or visit City Hall to assure that you are aware of all necessary requirements related to your project.

Each city adopts the same uniform codes; however, the interpretation and application of those codes vary. Each city also has similar ordinances regarding the use of land, the location, dimensions and other characteristics of buildings and structures. These also vary.

The City of Escondido utilizes the California Building Code, California Residential Code, California Green Building Code, California Plumbing Code, California Mechanical Code, California Electrical Code, California Fire Code, California Energy Code, the City Zoning Ordinance, other local ordinances, and various State regulations applicable to buildings and structures.

We understand that the rules and regulations may seem complex. It is our job to provide you with the information and personal attention to help you plan and complete your project.

Listed below is information on City departments and other agencies that you may need to contact when planning and completing your project.

**CITY HALL**      201 North Broadway (corner of Broadway and Valley Parkway—Public parking lot on Valley Parkway)

- Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**BUILDING DIVISION**      (760) 839-4647 (City Hall)

- Permits and Inspections
- Building Inspector Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Inspection Requests —(760) 839-4646  
(24 hour request line — **for inspection requests only**)

**PLANNING DIVISION**      (760) 839-4671 (City Hall)

- Zoning, Setbacks, Signs, Home Occupation Permits

**ENGINEERING DEPT.**      (760) 839-4651 (City Hall)

- Grading, Driveways, Parcel Maps, Curb Cuts, Storm water, BMP's, Encroachment Permits, Work in the Right-of-Way.

**FIRE DEPT. Prevention** (760) 839-5400

- Fire Severity Zones; Fire Sprinklers; State Fire Marshall (SFM) provisions affecting building construction.

**WATER DEPT.** (760) 839-4682 (City Hall)

- Water Billing, Water Meters

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

- 141 E Carmel St, San Marcos  
(760) 471-0730
- Any remodel or addition to property on a septic system will require Health Department approval prior to permit issuance.

**ESCONDIDO UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

- 2310 Aldergrove Avenue, Escondido — (760) 432-2400 or 432-2382
- For payment of school fees for New Residential, Commercial, and Industrial buildings; residential additions of 500 square feet or more in area.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Q. Why do I need a permit?**

- A. Permits are required by local ordinances. Although at times it may not seem so, permits are for your benefit. They ensure that buildings and structures are structurally sound, that electrical wiring is safe, and that plumbing and mechanical systems function properly and are free of health hazards. They also control the type of construction and the use of property to ensure that the City maintains high quality of life standards for its citizens.

### **Q. Where do I start?**

- A. Step 1 — Obtain your assessor's parcel number (on your tax bill), legal description, dimensions of your lot lines, and location of any easements (shown in your home purchase information, title report, grant deed, etc.).

Step 2 — Sketch a plot plan. If you have trouble, stop by the Building Division counter to get a sample plot plan. Depending on your project, we may have additional information for your use.

Step 3 — Go to the Planning or Building Division counter with your information and sketch to get the applicable zoning regulations for your project.

(If your project is a patio cover, deck, retaining wall, etc., and you are using our standard guideline sheet as your plans, once your plot plan is complete and approved by Planning Division, a Building Permit may be issued.)

Step 4 — Once you have gathered your information and checked with the Planning Division and Building Division, plans must be prepared. If the project is located in a development with a homeowner's association, written approval of the plans by the association's architectural committee is usually required to be submitted when you submit plans to the City.

Step 5 — When the plans are complete, bring three (3) sets plus one extra Plot Plan to the Planning or Building Division counter for Plot Plan approval, then submit for Plan Check at the Building Division counter.

### **Q. How much do permits cost?**

- A. See section on PERMIT AND PLAN CHECK FEES.

### **Q. Why is a Plot Plan necessary?**

- A. Additions and accessory structures must comply with building code and zoning regulations regarding setbacks. Setbacks are minimum dimensions from property lines that cannot be encroached upon by buildings or structures.

### **Q. Who applies for a permit?**

- A. If you are a homeowner preparing for a do-it-yourself project, you apply. Otherwise, your contractor may apply for the permit.

### **Q. Must I appear in person to apply?**

- A. If a licensed contractor is obtaining the permit, no. If the homeowner is doing the project, yes, or the homeowner's agent.

### **Q. Who may obtain a permit?**

- A. A licensed contractor or contractor's agent, owner or owner's agent. (Agents must have specific, written authorization.) A contractor must have a City Business License and present proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance at time of permit issuance.

If an owner or contractor has signed the permit and an agent is obtaining the permit, proof of signature may be required (copy of driver's license, etc.). Owner/builder permits will require the completion of Owner Verification forms.

**Q. How do I call for an inspection?**

A. Call our inspection request line (839-4646) 24 hours a day. Call before 7:00 a.m. and you will have your inspection scheduled for that same day.

**Q. How long does it take to obtain a permit?**

A. Over-the-counter permits may be issued for miscellaneous plumbing, electrical, and mechanical work, and for work per City guidelines. Building Division plan check time will vary based on the project complexity, staffing levels, and workload. Every effort will be made to review the plan in 10-20 working days. Corrections may be required.

**Q. How long is Plan Check good for?**

A. 360 days with a possible 180-day extension.

**Q. How long is my permit good for?**

A. To validate the permit, work must be started within 180 days. If work is abandoned for 180 days or more, the permit expires. One 180-day extension is possible upon written request prior to the expiration date. Extensions may be subject to additional fees. Permits issued as a result of a Notice of Violation or Notice and Order may have lesser time frames.

**Q. Are energy calculations required?**

A. Information to incorporate into your plans to comply with State energy regulations is available at the Building Division counter. In some cases, energy calculations may be required.

**Q. Does the entire building have to comply with current codes, if doing a remodel or addition?**

A. In general, no. Depending on the work, you may have to install smoke detectors. Certain structural additions or plumbing, electrical and mechanical additions may require modification to the existing building to accommodate the new work.

**Q. What happens if work has been done without a permit?**

A. If an inspector discovers work being done without a permit, a **STOP WORK ORDER** will be issued. Permits must be obtained to continue, or the work removed. If work has been done in the past without a permit and we receive a complaint stating such, a Notice will be issued to obtain all permits and inspections or remove the work. Work done without permits must comply with current codes and may be subject to double permit fees.

**Q. Does existing work (done without permits) have to be removed?**

A. If it is brought to our attention and the owner fails to obtain permits as ordered, yes, it may have to be removed. NOTE: If a permit is obtained, portions of the work may have to be uncovered for inspection.

**Q. What is done once the project is complete?**

A. Permits are signed off, filed and microfilmed. Certain plans are microfilmed. On residential work, a Certificate of Occupancy is not issued. Your signed-off inspection card is your record and should be kept.

**Q. Do I need a permit for a concrete patio?**

A. Permits are not required for concrete flatwork. Permits are required for attached patio overhead structures. NOTE: When doing concrete walks and patios, plan for surface drainage on your lot. Your lot drainage should not be diverted to your neighbor's lot. Alteration of flatwork adjacent to a swimming pool may affect the bonding grid.

**Q. Do I need a permit for yard drains?**

A. Not for drains on your property. If you are thinking about running your yard drains under the public sidewalk to the curb and gutter, contact the Engineering Department for an Encroachment Permit and for installation standards.

**Q. What if I want to open a business in my home?**

A. Contact the Planning Division regarding a Home Occupation Permit.

**Q. What about a new driveway?**

A. Contact the Engineering Department.

**Q. Does the City do compliance inspections?**

A. No, there are a number of private firms that offer this service.

**Q. Do you have records of permits on my house?**

A. In general, Yes, if it was originally built within the city. Obviously some homes were built prior to record-keeping. Permit records are microfilmed and filed by street address. (Building Division counter)

**Q. What do I do if I want to put in a concrete patio slab now, but put in a patio structure in the future?**

A. A permit is not required for the concrete slab, but, if you wish to incorporate post footings in the slab for the future patio, a patio foundation permit can be obtained. The permit and subsequent footing inspection provides a record for the future patio post footings. This also eliminates the possibility of future saw-cutting of the slab for the footings.

**PERMITS NOT REQUIRED**

The following work does not require building permits. The work may, however, be regulated by the City's Zoning Ordinance. If noted below, you should contact the Planning or Building Division for the zoning regulations for your project.

Although building permits may not required for this work, please call or stop by the Building Division counter if you have any questions. There are a number of Information Guidelines available for fences, decks and retaining walls.

- \*One-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet. NOTE: Applicable only to single-family dwellings.
- \*Fences not over 6 feet high.
- Partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches high.
- \*Retaining walls which are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge. (Note: a sloping backfill is considered a surcharge).

- \*Decks, walkways, and platforms not more than 30 inches above grade measured vertical to the floor or grade below at any point within thirty-six inches horizontally to the edge of the open side, and not over any basement or story below unless part of an accessible path of travel.
  - Except for buildings on the historical register or in the Old Escondido Neighborhood, the installation of replacement windows in existing window openings associated with a residential dwelling unit with no modifications to the existing rough opening or to the exterior weather proofing. This does not exempt the installation from retaining code compliance for bedroom egress.
  - Ground-supported, non-internally illuminated signs, 6 feet or less in height. Planning approval and permit requirements per the Zoning Code are applicable.
  - Painting, papering and similar finish work.
  - Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of a single-family dwelling or its accessory structures when projecting not more than 54 inches.
  - \*Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a single-family dwelling in which the pool walls are entirely above the adjacent grade and if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons.
  - Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one and two-family dwellings
- \* Subject to Zoning Regulations—Contact the Planning or Building Division.

In general, permits will be required for any mechanical, electrical or plumbing work associated with the above items.

Remember, if in doubt, please give us a call. 839-4647.

### **PERMITS REQUIRED**

Except as noted above, permits are required for the following:

- All buildings or structures.
- All remodels or alterations, including nonbearing walls.
- Any electrical, mechanical or plumbing remodels or alterations.
- Water heater replacements.
- Grading of property (contact Engineering Department).
- Lath and plastering.
- Swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, fountains.
- Patio enclosures.
- Solar installations.
- Re-roofing.
- Replacement of windows and doors where framing or reframing is required. (If replacing bedroom windows, the code requires certain minimum sizes for emergency egress—please call the Building Division.)

Again, if in doubt, please call.

**PERMIT AND PLAN CHECK FEES**

Building Permit fees are based on the valuation\* of the work proposed, computed on the cost per square foot for the type of work intended. The Building Code requires the determination of valuation to be made by the Building Official. Uniform, standard costs per square foot are adopted annually by jurisdictions countywide for this purpose. Development fees, such as the Art Fee, are established by Ordinance by the City Council. Plan Check fees are paid when plans are submitted. School fees are paid to the school district prior to permit issuance. All other fees are paid when the permit is issued.

Plan Check fees are not charged if you use our Information Guidelines (patios, decks, retaining walls, etc.), Planning (approx. \$35-\$195) and Fire Review Fees (\$100-\$275) are applicable.

\* Or an itemized cost estimate from an architect or contractor. The estimate is subject to approval by the plan's examiner.

Listed below is a general summary of fees.

PERMIT TYPE	PLAN CHECK FEE	PERMIT FEES
• Plumbing remodel/addition (varies based on scope of work)	n/a	*
• Electrical remodel/addition	n/a	*
• Upgrade electrical service/meter	n/a	*
• Mechanical remodel/addition	n/a	*
• Garage/Workshop (400 sq. ft.)	\$120	\$140-\$320
• Detached Carport (400 sq. ft.)	\$100	\$100-\$130
• Room Addition (Fee shown includes miscellaneous plumbing, electrical and mechanical work.)		
• 100 sq. ft.	\$140	\$175-\$350
• 200 sq. ft.	\$200	\$270-\$400
• 300 sq. ft.	\$260	\$360-\$500
• 400 sq. ft.	\$320	\$430-\$600
• 500 sq. ft.	\$350	\$500-\$650
• Room Addition - School Fee: For room additions of 500 square feet or more, school fees will be payable to the school district. For further information, call the school district at 432-2382.		
• Patio covers, decks, retaining walls		
• Patio covers, decks	\$70-\$100	\$45-\$90
• Retaining walls	\$75-\$110	\$60-\$150
(Note: No Building Division plan check fee if you use our Information Guidelines)		
• Patio enclosures	\$70-\$100	\$50-\$110
• In-ground, Gunite pools _____ average permit fees vary from \$340-\$550 due to size.		
• In-ground Gunite spas _____ average total permit fees = \$280-\$450.		
• Portable spas _____ no building permit required. A miscellaneous plumbing and/or electrical permit would be required if plumbing and/or electrical work is being done.		
• Re-roofing _____ for a 2,000 square foot home, permit fees vary from \$50-\$160 depending on the type of roofing. (Minimum Planning Review \$35 may be required)		

NOTE:1. THESE ARE GENERAL AVERAGE FEES FOR TYPICAL PROJECTS. FEES FOR LARGER PROJECTS WILL VARY FROM THE RANGES SHOWN. (PLAN CHECK FEE INCLUDES PLANNING AND FIRE REVIEWS)

2. FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

3. PERMITS ISSUED AS A RESULT OF STOPWORK ORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO DOUBLE PERMIT FEES.

\*Plumbing, electrical and mechanical permit fees vary based on the actual work being proposed.

Please ask for a copy of our fee schedule.

## **PLANS REQUIRED**

In general, plans are required for all building alterations, additions and accessory structures. A plot plan is also required for all additions and accessory structures. Minor projects may be done using our Information Guidelines (Patio Covers, Decks, Retaining Walls). For these projects, a Plot Plan would still be required; however, you would use our Guideline specifications as your plans. If you want to deviate from the Guidelines, you must submit plans. A sample Plot Plan is available at the Building counter.

Plans submitted may be prepared by the owner, architect, engineer, building designer, or a person skilled in plan preparation. However, plans prepared by those other than licensed architects or engineers are limited to one and two story buildings and/or structures of conventional (wood-frame) construction. Buildings or structures with masonry building walls (not foundation stem walls) or unusual spans and foundations may require an architect or engineer.

Plans must be drawn to scale, fully dimensioned, and clearly indicate the scope of work. Minor projects may be drawn on sheets no smaller than 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Larger projects should be drawn on sheets no larger than 24 x 36 inches. All sheets should be of the same uniform size. Three (3) copies of plans are normally required for submittal.

The following drawings are the minimum required for submittal for plan review:

- **Plot Plan:** shows size of lot, the legal description, any recorded easements and the abutting streets; shows location of, dimensions of and areas of all buildings and accessory structures. Dimensions to property lines and between all structures are to be shown. Driveways and slopes must also be shown. If your sewer goes to a septic system, the tank location and leach fields must be indicated. County Health Department approval required. (A sample Plot Plan and Plot Plan form are available at the Building Division counter.)
- **Foundation or Footing Plan:** shows size and location of footings, walls and piers, size and spacing of girders and floor joists, thickness of concrete slab and depth of fills. (Fills greater than one foot in depth or in excess of 200 cubic yards require a Grading Permit from the Engineering Department.)
- **Floor Plan:** shows size and use of existing and proposed rooms, size and type of windows and doors, location of plumbing fixtures, electrical, overall dimensions, location and type of heating facilities, sill height of bedroom windows, all interior finishes, and location of existing and proposed smoke alarms.
- **Elevations:** show all exterior elevations indicating all openings, exits, vertical dimensions, type of roof covering, and all exterior finishes.
- **Cross Sections:** through the building as may be necessary to show the structural arrangements and materials from the footings to the roof, including size and spacing of studs, floor joists, ceiling joists and roof rafters. Show clearance from earth to wood floor, ceiling height, eave projection and roof pitch. Show insulation in walls and ceilings. Show roof slope, sheathing, nailing, type of roofing, etc.
- **Details:** - Sufficient details must be shown to clearly explain structural details and all fire resistive construction.
- **“Enhanced Construction”:** applies to and required in areas of the City of Escondido identified by the Fire Prevention Division relating to “Fire-Severity”.
- **Specifications:** of quality of materials, concrete, mortar and grout mix proportions, grade and species of lumber, plaster and paint.
- **Truss Drawings:** are required if using prefabricated trusses.
- **Energy Regulation Compliance:** information to be shown on plans to comply with State energy regulations. Energy calculations may be required.

## **PLAN REVIEW**

Miscellaneous plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits are normally issued over-the-counter. Minor projects that use our standard guidelines for plans are normally issued over-the-counter. All other projects, unless the work is very minor, must be submitted for Plan Check to verify compliance with codes and ordinances. Plan Check times vary based on project complexity, staffing levels, and workload. Attempts will be made to complete the review in 5 to 15 working days. When your plans have been checked, you will be notified. Plan corrections are normally required.

If the building is connected to a septic system and an addition or accessory structure is proposed, San Diego County Health Department approval will be required prior to permit issuance.

## **INSPECTIONS**

Once your building permit has been approved and issued, you will receive an inspection card and a set of approved plans. Maintain both the card and plans on the job site at all times and available for the inspector's use. When certain phases of the work have been completed and inspected, the inspector will sign off that phase on the inspection card. Then you may proceed with the next phase.

If the inspector finds the work is not per the approved plans or not per code, a correction notice will be posted on the job. The owner and/or contractor is then responsible to make such corrections and request a re-inspection before proceeding with the next phase. If you have any questions regarding the corrections, please do not hesitate to call your inspector. The following inspections are the minimum as required by code:

- **Underground and Setbacks** — When trenching is complete, forms set, conduit or piping has been laid, applicable plumbing system water and/or air tests are being made and before trench backfill.
- **Foundation and Footings** — When trenches are excavated, forms are set and reinforcing steel is in place, prior to placing any concrete.
- **Roof Nailing** — When roof sheathing has been nailed and prior to installing roofing material. (Not applicable to patio covers.)
- **Framing** — When all framing is complete. Roofing installed. All rough wiring, plumbing (with test), mechanical, vents, chimneys, ducts complete. Prior to exterior lath or insulation.
- **Exterior Lath/Drywall** — When completely installed, prior to plaster/stucco and prior to taping and finishing. A final gas test must be provided on any gas piping at this inspection.
- **Final** — When all work is complete and prior to occupancy. Other department approvals required prior to Building Final

If in doubt about when to call for an inspection, please contact your inspector. If you are not ready for an inspection but wish to consult with your inspector about a particular situation, please feel free to call your inspector during his scheduled office hours.

Inspections are conducted between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you need to arrange for a time to meet your inspector after you have placed an inspection request on our 24-hour inspection request line (839-4646), call your inspector (839-4647) between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. on the day of inspection. Your inspector will make every effort to accommodate your time request, depending on the inspection schedule.).

**GUIDELINE LIST**

The guidelines listed below are available at the Building Division counter.

<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>GUIDELINE NO.</u></b>
General Building Permit Requirements for Residential Alterations and Additions (Available in English and Spanish).....	1
Building Permit Requirements for Retaining Wall.....	2
Building Permit Requirements for Fences (Wood and Masonry).....	3
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Minimum Construction Specification.....	5
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