



Building Inspections

Commercial Alterations

Do you need a Building Permit for commercial alterations?

A Building Permit is required for alterations to an existing business or to accommodate a new business (including walls, ceilings, plumbing, etc.), and when the use or occupancy classification is changing from the previous business occupancy.

Occupancy classification, or use, is divided into the following categories:

- A. Assembly Uses [e.g. restaurant (A occupancies >150m² require a Coordinating Registered Professional as per BC Building Code 2.6)]
- B. Institutional [e.g. hospital / school (Coordinating Registered Professional required)]
- C. Residential
- D. Business & Personal Service (e.g. office, beauty salon)
- E. Mercantile (e.g. retail, take-out)
- F. Industrial (e.g. warehouse, manufacturing)

Things you should know when applying for a Building Permit

The application must be made in person or by your authorized representative at the Building Inspection Division, 238 Franklyn Street, Nanaimo, BC.

Typical information required for Permit application

Two fully dimensioned and detailed sets of plans drawn to scale (eg: 1/4" = 1', 1/8" = 1' or metric equivalent), which includes:

- Site plan or key plan
- Floor plans showing existing and proposed construction including:
 - use of space
 - structural changes
 - exits and means of egress, fire separations
 - washrooms, access for persons with disabilities
 - sprinkler system changes (engineering required for changes to more than 8 heads)
 - plumbing, including any food preparation areas
 - commercial cooking equipment (exhaust/extinguishing system installation detail)
- Where plumbing changes are proposed, include:
 - Isometric drawing of drainage and water lines with pipe sizing and type and plumbers name and phone number (guideline available on the City web site or at our office)
 - Plumbing Declaration Form (form available on the City web site or at our office)

Please note:

- *Food / drink preparation areas, pools and hot tubs for public use require Department of Health approval. Health approval should be submitted with the Building Permit application.*
- *Change of Occupancy may require structural upgrade of the building including seismic restraint.*
- *You may need to supply a parking plan and a landscape plan for the Permit application.*

How long will it take to process the Building Permit?

Approximately three to four weeks unless revisions are required to the plans or additional approvals such as Development Permits, Health Approval, etc. are required.

Contact our Planning Division directly at 250-755-4429 regarding the requirements for Development Permits, setbacks, parking requirements and appropriate zoning for the use proposed.

Review and approval process

1. Applicant and Plan Checker meet to review application.
2. Building Inspector reviews site.
3. Plan Checker reviews plans and indicates all required upgrading to drawings to ensure the construction meets local bylaws and BC Building Code standards.
 - *The applicant is responsible to have drawings revised to reflect required changes. The permit is issued with the condition that the construction is to be done as per the changes to the drawings.*
 - *The permit holder must call the Building Inspection Division to schedule inspections at the intervals noted on the inspection card enclosed with the permit package. Approved drawings must be on site for inspection.*

How much will the Permit cost?

The permit cost is based upon the supplied estimated value of construction and any new fixtures:

Value of construction \$500 or less	\$40.00
Value of construction \$501 to \$1,000.....	\$65.00
Each additional \$1,000 of value to \$100,000	\$10.00
Each additional \$1,000 of value to \$500,000	\$ 7.00
Each additional \$1,000 of value over \$500,000	\$ 4.50
Plumbing fixtures	\$ 8.00 per fixture or \$40.00 minimum fee
Sprinklers	\$ 0.50 per m ² , or \$40.00 minimum fee

- *On- or off-site service cost and other fees may be applicable, including Development Cost Charges when new or additional floor area is added and when the value of construction exceeds \$50,000.00.*

Other permits that may be required:

Through the Building Inspection Division:

- Signage

Through the Provincial Government:

- Electrical 716-5200
- Gas and Propane 716-5206
- Public Health 755-6215

As this is not an exhaustive list, please contact the Building Inspection Department at 250-755-4429 for more information. Additional guidelines and forms are available on the City of Nanaimo web site www.nanaimo.ca under Business, Builders and Developers, Publications and Forms.