

Frequently Asked Questions – Town of Epsom

When Do I need a building permit? *Article VI*

A building permit is also called a “zoning compliance permit” and the town has a Zoning Compliance Officer on staff to review and issue (or deny) such permits. The regulations state the need for a permit is as follows; “the erection or use of any new building, exterior sign, other structure, or addition to any existing building or structure.” Which could mean that a permit is required for sheds, porches, in-law addition, or any structure over 16 square feet, etc. A change in use of an existing building will also require a permit process. Any demolition work and moving or replacing a mobile home, will also require a permit.

It is best to call the office prior to starting construction to check on the need of a permit to avoid any violations and/or fines that could be imposed.

How long is permit good for?

A permit shall become void if construction is not started within 12 months from the date it was approved. Permit can be extended with permission from the Zoning Compliance Officer, two weeks prior to expiration date. There is a minimum application fee of \$20.00 to have the permit extended for one year.

What is a C.O.?

A C.O. is a “Certificate of Occupancy”. It is basically a permit of “use” or permission to occupy a structure. A C.O. is issued by the Zoning Compliance Officer which means if approved; the use and/or structure have met all the required zoning regulations.

A C.O. is not required for normal repair or redecorating of structures.

Can I replace my Manufactured home with a new one?

Yes, but you must meet the regulations and apply for a building/zoning permit with the Zoning Compliance Officer first. In our regulations, it states; “that no manufactured home, pre-existing or hereafter created, may be altered, enlarged, improved or rehabilitated, or replaced without first obtaining a permit consistent with Article VI.”

What type of inspections is required?

Once the Zoning Compliance Officer has the application, an inspection of the property or site will be done to check the “setbacks”. The new construction must meet the required setback distance in our regulations, for example: you need 15’ from your property line on each side to the new structure, 50’ from the front property line and 20’ from the rear property line. (If the lot is at a corner of two roads, you will need to have the required frontage from both front (road) setbacks which is 50’).

Also, if you are building near a wetland, the setback is 50’. If these setbacks cannot be met you may have other options such as applying for variance through the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The permit will not be approved until the setbacks are met and/or a variance has been granted.

Life Safety, electrical and other inspections are done by the Fire Department.

For installation of fuel burners, a permit and inspection is also done by the Fire Department.

Do I need a permit for a sign?

Yes, the regulations are in Article III; section M in our zoning ordinance. There are restrictions on sizes and the number of signs allowed at the business. Generally, no neon, flashing or internally lit signs are allowed.

Do I need a permit for a generator?

You may not need a zoning compliance permit for a generator but you will need to contact the Fire Department for Life Safety Inspection.

What other types of permit might I need?

A septic system will require a State approved plan and the plans are reviewed and stamped at the Town Office first.

For residential homes, an Energy Code Application is required and approved by the NH Public Utilities Commission. A new driveway construction will also need a permit from the Road Agent.

If you are doing a “raffle” in Town you will need the Board of Selectmen to approve your raffle request.

What do I need to do for a new business?

If you want to start a new business you would first contact the Zoning Compliance Officer. If your new business is in an existing business location you may not require the Planning or Zoning Board’s approval. If the businesses are similar it may not be considered a “change of use”. If it is a new business and new location, you will require Planning Board approval for a site plan review. If the business is not allowed in that location, you may need to apply for a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

All new businesses that are approved for “use” will also require a sign permit.

What is a variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment?

In our regulations, Article II, we have a Table of uses and divide the districts into Residential Agricultural, Residential Commercial and Residential Light Commercial. Each district allows different uses and you will find what is permitted by special exception from the Zoning Board and/or what is not allowed in this Table of Uses. If a category is not listed, it is best to contact the Zoning Compliance Office to discuss.

Who do I call about the assessment of my property?

The Town has an Assessment Department who will assist you with any questions you may have about your tax card, property file and tax rates. The Assessment Department will also have information as to the company we hire that does the actual assessments on your property.

Please visit our web site, www.epsomnh.org, for more details of the property which may be listed on the “assessment” card or visit the office to view the entire folder of the property.

Please visit entire listing of all Town Departments, Planning and Zoning regulations.