

## **RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION & HOME IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES**

To assist you through the construction and permitting process, following are general guidelines you need to know. You must obtain required permits when you plan to construct, alter or repair a single family home or accessory structure. Please remember that the information provided is subject to change as building requirements and laws change throughout the year. Some projects you undertake may also require special permits. Therefore, please consult with Building Division staff before planning your project to obtain the most current requirements.

The City of Pico Rivera uses the most current edition of the California Building Codes, with minor changes to meet local conditions. The purpose of this code is to provide minimum standards for construction and use of structures to safeguard life, property and the public welfare.

The other City offices who may be involved in the construction review process are the Planning Division and the Public Works Department.

The Planning Division reviews location, height and use of buildings on private property as regulated by the City Zoning Ordinance. For more information about the responsibilities and functions of the Planning Division, call (562) 801-4332.

The Public Works Department is responsible for reviewing excavation, grading and earthwork construction projects. For more information about the functions and responsibilities of this department, call (562) 801-4415.

### **PERMITS**

You should obtain a permit before you:

1. erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, connect, or demolish any building or structure
2. perform any grading or direct someone to undertake this.
3. install or alter anything with your home's electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning systems
4. install or construct swimming pools, spas, blockwalls, satellite dish antennas, landscape irrigation systems and water heaters
5. other projects of similar nature.

When in doubt, please consult with the Building Division to determine if a permit is required. You may send an email or call (562) 801-4360 for clarification.

A building permit is not required for the following:

1. Installation of wooden or chain link fences that do not exceed 6 feet in height and masonry garden walls that are less than 3 feet in height.
2. Painting, wallpapering and similar finish work.

3. Pre-fabricated metal storage sheds 120 sq. ft. or less in conjunction with a detached single family home. The shed should be used for storage of garden type-equipment.

Keep in mind that although some work may be exempt from building permits, compliance to Planning Division and Public Works Department requirements may be required. For example, a clearance is required from the Public Works Department to verify there will be no encroachment upon the public way when you erect a chain link or wooden fence that is not over 6 feet in height.

The Building Division will issue permits to property owners doing improvements on their own home. Should you hire someone to perform the work, you will be required to obtain Worker's Compensation Insurance to cover that person in case of injury, as well as protect yourself. You should be aware that as the "Owner/Builder," you are the responsible party of record on such permit.

You must also submit a written authorization for your agent (contractor, architect, etc.) for them to be allowed to pull permits on your behalf.

The Building Division will also issue permits to contractors licensed by the State of California. If the work is being performed by a licensed contractor, you may protect yourself from possible liability if the contractor obtains the proper permit in his name.

**Plan Check/Permit Fees**

Building permit fees vary in proportion to the value of the proposed construction, including all material and all labor used in making the improvement. The electric, plumbing and mechanical permit fees are based on circuits, fixtures, number and size of units, etc. Grading permit fees are determined by the volume of earth handled. Grading plans must be reviewed and approved before a grading permit is issued.

**Plan Review Procedure:**

Many improvement project permits may be issued over-the-counter. These projects include block walls, water heaters, lawn sprinklers, house re-piping, electrical services and re-roofing. For other improvements the following steps should be followed:

**First Step**

Submit your application for a building permit together with one copy of your site/plot plan, drawn to an appropriate scale, showing all existing and proposed structures to the Planning Division for zoning consistency review. The plan should clearly show the size and shape of the lot, including a north arrow legal description location and dimensions of existing and proposed construction distances of the proposed construction from all property lines, distances from other buildings on the property and width of street and driveway. Please contact the Planning Division for required rear yard, side yard and front yard setbacks.

After review by Planning, Public Works and Redevelopment, you will be contacted by the Building Permit Technician. If the site plan is approved, you will go to the next step. If the site plan is not approved, you will be given reasons why and possible direction/s as to how the proposed plan may be modified or corrected.

## **Second Step**

Upon approval of your site/plot plan from the Planning Division, you may now submit the following:

1. Three complete sets of your construction drawings
2. approved site plan and list of Planning Division conditions (Zoning Consistency Review Decision)
3. Building Permit/Construction Plan Review Application Form
4. Construction Plan Review Liability Release Form, if applicable
5. Building Valuation Form for New Construction, if applicable

The three sets of plans and specifications submitted should be of legible quality and reasonable scale. They must clearly show the material, size and arrangement of foundation, framing of floors, walls and roofs, arrangement of rooms, size of windows, insulation and details of special features--such as fireplaces, chimneys, beam ceilings, balconies or similar items. The plan check fee should be paid when plans are submitted to the Building Division. Two-story residential construction requires structural calculations prepared by a licensed engineer or architect.

After review by the Building Division you will be contacted by the Building Permit Technician. If construction plans are approved, a building permit will be issued. If construction plans are denied, you will be given a list of corrections. To facilitate the review of corrected plans, you must make all corrections requested on new sets of plans and return these together with all originally reviewed (red-marked) plans received from each department.

## **Construction Permit**

Construction needs to commence within six months of permit issuance and continued until the project is completed. Construction permits expire if the work is not started *within six months from the date of issuance*, or if the work *is suspended or abandoned for a period of six months after start of work*. Permit extensions are handled the same as plan check extensions. You should keep the Building Inspector informed of your progress to avoid cancellation of permits.

Upon completion of construction, you must request a final inspection from the Building Division. Permits that do not receive final inspection approval can present a problem when a house is refinanced or sold. Many lending institutions will not lend money when permits do not exist or where permits do not have final inspection approval.

Contractors are required to show proof of their state license and Workers' Compensation Insurance. Homeowners should verify that proper permits have been obtained prior to starting work and **upon completion of work, that final approval has been granted in writing on the building permit.**

## **INSPECTIONS**

All construction or work for which a permit is required is subject to periodic inspection by the Building Inspector. You must display the yellow inspection record card in a conspicuous place on the premises until final approval has been granted by the Building Inspector. Final approval in *writing* by the Building Inspector is your assurance that the work has been accepted by the Building Division.

### **Requests for Inspections**

Requests for inspection should be made with the Building Division 24 hours in advance. Inspection requests may be called in any time during regular office hours (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closed on alternate Fridays).

### **Required Inspections**

The Building Inspector is required to inspect several aspects of a building's construction to ensure compliance to approved building safety codes and plans. These include, but may not be limited to the building's foundation, concrete slab or under-floor, frame, insulation and stucco.

You should notify the Building Division when you are ready for such inspections. Following these inspections, the Building Inspector will either approve that portion of construction as completed or notify you or your agent when the construction fails to comply with the Code or approved plans. It is your duty to make sure the work to be inspected remains accessible and exposed for inspection purposes. The inspector is not liable for any expense entailed in the removal or replacement of any material required to allow inspection.

Following is a summary description of when these inspections are usually conducted by the Building Division:

#### **A. Foundation**

When trenches are excavated, forms and reinforcing steel are in place, and all materials for the foundation are delivered to the job site (except transit-mixed concrete). Some projects may require acceptance of a certificate of grading by the Public Works Director before any foundation work begins.

#### **B. Concrete Slab or Under-Floor**

When all in-slab or under-floor building conduit, piping accessories, service equipment and other items are in place, but before any concrete is poured.

**C. Frame**

1. When the wall, floor and roof framing, conduits, roof sheathing and plywood shear wall bracing are in place and all pipes, chimneys and vents are complete. **Please note that floor joists are to be inspected before under-floor insulation or floor sheathing is placed.** Under-floor insulation should be supported on wires spaced at 18 inches on center.
2. When all rough electrical wiring, plumbing piping, and heating duct work is installed. Gas piping will be subjected to a pressure test of 10 p.s.i. for 15 minutes. This test will be observed by the Building Inspector. **Masonry fireplaces, however, require inspections at foundation, throat and chimney.**

**D. Insulation/Lath.**

To be made after all lath and thermal insulation is installed and all window, door and sill caulking is complete.

**E. Stucco/Gypsum Board.**

Stucco scratch and brown coat inspections are required after installation of gypsum board. Gypsum board nailing/screwing is to be inspected before tapping and finishing.

**Final Inspection**

1. When all electrical and plumbing fixtures and heating and cooling equipment is in place. A final gas pressure test is required at time of final.
2. When finish grading is complete.
3. When dwelling/addition is complete and ready for occupancy.

In addition to the inspections noted above, the Building Official may require other inspections as deemed necessary. Investigations and reports by an approved soil testing agency, consultant geotechnical engineer or "Duty Inspector" may also be required.

**Inspection Record Card.**

An inspection Record Card is assigned to the permit holder when the permit is issued. This card identifies the required inspections that need to be requested from the Building Inspector. **PLEASE SAVE THIS CARD.** This is your record of inspection approval.

For additional guidelines concerning general residential building requirements, including room dimensions, installing security bars and grills, smoke detectors, etc. please see: *Other General Construction Guidelines.*

**Curb breaks, driveways, sidewalk, street excavations or improvements within the public right-of-way:**

Before breaking the street curb, constructing a driveway apron or sidewalk, or before making any excavation in the street right-of-way, you must obtain a permit from the Public Works Department.

Installation of sidewalks, curbs and gutters may be required as a part of the construction, if alterations to an existing building exceed 50% of the value of the existing residence.

**Stop Work Orders**

If work has been started without required permits, the inspector may issue an Order to Comply (Stop Work Order). The work shall be exposed for a special inspection to determine compliance with applicable codes or the work must be completely removed. The Pico Rivera Municipal Code provides that permit fees be doubled when work has been done without permits.

**Fees**

Additional fees may be required for:

- Park Development (New homes, apartments or guest houses.)
- School District (New construction or additions over 500 sq. ft.)
- Sewer Reconstruction
- Covenant Agreement to Hold Parcels as One
- Covenant Agreement for Guest Houses
- Grading Plan Check/Permit
- Planning Review
- Sidewalk, Curb/Gutter, Driveway, Grading or Encroachment Permit
- Public Image Enhancement for valuations over \$100,000.
- Waste Management Plan Deposit (for construction and demolition with a valuation of \$100,000 or more) Contact the City's Environmental Coordinator for more information by calling 562.801.4328.