

CHECKLIST FOR HOMEOWNERS CONSIDERING A BUILDING PROJECT

The information in this handout is general in nature. For more specific information individuals should research specific sections of city and state laws. We emphasize that homeowners need do their research. The more you know the better your project will go.

WHERE TO START

1. Contact your local Building Department for information. This office has handouts and information that will assist you with your proposed project.
2. Locate all utility lines before starting the design of your project. Building over some types of material (i.e. PVC, SDR) is prohibited.
3. Is your existing electrical service large enough to accommodate the proposed new construction?
4. Develop a site plan as one of your first items.
5. Always check with the Planning Department (775-623-6392) for zoning questions and required setbacks. The Building Department also has setback requirements.
6. Verify that your lot is not in a designated flood area.
7. Manufactured houses have many different requirements. If you add on to a manufactured home ask for specific information regarding building requirements.
8. Have your assessor's parcel number available for permit inquiries. Contact the Assessor's office (623-6310) for this information.

PERMITS

9. Most projects will require a building permit, however, there are several projects that do not. Check with the building department before beginning any projects.
10. Permits are also required for electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling systems.
11. There are fees associated with building permits so plan for these costs in your budget.
12. No work, including excavation, should begin on any project until the required permits are obtained.
13. Permits are valid for work commenced within 6 months of permit issuance; and if work is not suspended or abandoned for a period of more than 6 months from the last inspection. One 6 month extension may be granted by the Building Dept. However, if work is not commenced within the extended time frame, a new permit must be obtained for the project.

PLANS

14. Make sure you find out what plans are required by the Building Department. Plans that are required to be submitted to the Building Department will go through a plan review process to ensure compliance. This could take one day to two weeks depending on the size of the project and volume of work that the Building Dept. has at the time of the plan submittal.
15. Review city handouts for required plans submittal. If there is any special construction, engineering may be required.
16. Keep drawing rough sketches. The more you sketch, the more suggestions you get, which will tend to improve the design. Verify your elevations. Check to see how roof lines will come together. Make sure your furniture will fit.
17. Check grade in areas of new construction. If the area is low you will need to make provisions for maintaining the required grade and slope away from the building.

18. Draw plans on standard paper. Make sure drawings can be reproduced. Label everything on the plans.
19. If someone draws the plans for you, the individual is required to comply with the state Architect and Engineer licensing laws as well as all code requirements.

CONTRACTORS

20. Hiring an unlicensed contractor will hold you, the owner, responsible for complying with applicable codes, correcting any construction problems and bad workmanship. You can be held responsible for a unlicensed contractors' illegal acts. You can also be held liable for on the job injuries, taxes or insurance. Remember, unlicensed contracting is a crime - so beware of unlicensed contractors.
21. Shop around for a licensed contractor. The contractor must be licensed in the State of Nevada. Make sure they have the appropriate license for bidding on your project.
22. Plan your project carefully and be specific. Have accurate plans or drawings prepared for contractors to bid. If you have specific products in mind for your project, make this information clear to the contractors that are bidding on the project.
23. Get several written bids from contractors licensed in the State of Nevada. Be sure the contractor includes their license number on the bid. When starting your bidding process, be sure that all potential contractors are viewing the same set of prints .
24. Make sure the contractor is not bidding over their license limit. The Building Department or the Contractors Board can verify this information.
25. Be cautious of bids that are substantially lower than other bids. The contractor may have made a mistake or may not be including all the work quoted by the other contractors. Remember: If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. You could request a construction cost breakdown if you want to evaluate the bids.
26. Check the contractors' license before signing any contracts. Research the license number, the license limit, the license classification, and current standing with the Nevada State Contractor's Board website.
27. Ask for references. Visit sites and examine the work that the contractor has completed or work that is currently under construction.
28. A general contractor is required by law to hire sub-contractors for electrical, plumbing, heating, and cooling. Make sure you get the sub-contractors names and verify that they have the required Nevada license, as well.
29. Understand the contract and make sure everything is included.
30. Keep copies of all documents throughout the construction project.
31. Make sure the contractor includes a warranty clause which states when the warranty begins, length of the warranty period, warranty coverage, and exclusions under the warranty. Make sure you clearly understand the warranty language.
32. Have everything in writing. No work should be performed without your authorization. Make all changes in writing signed by owner and contractor.
33. Make frequent inspections of your project, including a final walk through.
34. Pay directly to the contractor. Never pay employees or salesmen. Make sure your payment plans are in the contract, or all parties are clear on payment schedules.
35. The contractor is required by law to obtain the required building permits.
36. Beware if you are asked to pay money in advance or pay the entire job in advance.

37. If you decide that you will be an owner/builder keep in mind that you will need to become familiar with building permit requirements, general code requirements, and inspection requirements.
38. For more information obtain the brochure, "Get A Contractor Who's On The Level", issued by the Nevada State Contractors Board.

INSPECTIONS

39. Find out from the Building Department what inspections are required.
40. Make sure the work is ready when you request inspections. Re-inspection fees may be charged if the inspection is not ready or does not pass inspection.
41. All inspections must be requested one day in advance, minimum. Inspections called in after hours will not be logged in until the following business day, therefore, the inspection will occur a minimum of one day after the log-in date. Inspections are scheduled on a first-come first-serve basis, therefore, if you need an inspection in a specific time frame you will need to call in advance.

REFERENCES

42. The codes currently adopted are the 2012 International Residential Code, 2012 International Building Code, 2011 National Electrical Code, 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code, 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code, and the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code. These books are available at the Humboldt County Library.
43. There are well written self help and illustrated guides on the market to help the homeowner with proposed construction projects. Make sure these designs are written to comply with the Uniform Building Codes