

Town of Tazewell



DO I NEED A PERMIT?

PLEASE NOTE: The below applies to Residential projects only. Residential projects are one-family and two-family dwellings and townhouses. Apartment buildings, condos, and similar buildings are considered to be Commercial projects. For questions about Commercial projects, consult a Licensed Design Professional, or contact the **Building Department** at 276-988-2501 or tazbuildingoff@taztown.org.

Restrictive Covenants - Check with your homeowners' association (HOA) and/or any Subdivision Deeds to determine whether your community has restrictive covenants which would require neighborhood approval on any improvements or maintenance to the exterior of your house, including roofing, siding, painting, additions of decks or storage buildings/garages, and landscaping or privacy fences.

Zoning Approval - Exterior projects may require approval from the Town of Tazewell Zoning Department, whether or not a Building Permit is required. Zoning approval is always required for construction of principal buildings and accessory structures/buildings such as decks, additions, garages, carports, retaining walls, fences, hot tubs and swimming pools. Zoning approval is also required for some accessory uses, such as a secondary food preparation area (i.e. a wet bar and/or food warming kitchen) in a basement. You are urged to contact the Building Department at 276-988-2501 if you have any questions on Zoning requirements.

Building Code - All jurisdictions in Virginia are required to use the Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC). The state adopts the national model codes, with amendments, for use statewide so that everyone is subject to the same regulations. The applicable codes that are used for home improvement projects can be found on the [VUSBC \(Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code\) Web page](#). You may also obtain code and other helpful information from the Building Department.

Permits Always Required - A permit is always required for most all **commercial work** and the following work:

- Porches or decks where the floor is 16.5 inches or more above the finished grade
- Accessibility Upgrades (i.e. temporary ramps, permanent ramps, grab bars, widening doors and existing interior openings, wheelchair lifts)
- Additions
- Garages or carports
- Finishing your basement
- Secondary food preparation area - wet bar and/or food warming kitchen
- Residential accessory buildings (sheds) greater than 256 square feet in area
- Any barrier/ fence used for pedestrian safety or for a swimming pool

- All retaining walls supporting more than three feet of unbalanced fill
- Retaining wall of any height that supports a surge from a structure above (walls, roads, driveways, sidewalks, etc.)
- In-ground or above-ground swimming pools or spas impounding more than two feet of water, greater than 150 square feet, and greater than 5,000 gallons
- Removing or altering any structural (support) members and any work involving alterations to the house plumbing, electrical, or heating and air conditioning (mechanical) systems
- Installing a lawn irrigation system (permit required for backflow device)
- Installing a prefabricated fireplace, insert, or woodstove
- Installation or replacement of doors and/or windows when structural alterations are made or required
- Replacing gas or oil furnaces, gas logs, or appliances (water heater, range, etc.)
- Installing a new electrical circuit, fixture, or receptacle (see low voltage exception below)
- New appliances in a new location and upgraded appliances requiring electrical, plumbing, or mechanical systems upgrades

Building Permits Not Required - Remember that although the work is not subject to Building permit requirements, the work must be performed in a manner meeting code requirements and also may need a Zoning Permit. The following work does not require building permits, or is classified by the code as "ordinary repair"

*** Indicates that a Zoning Permit is required.**

- Residential accessory buildings (storage sheds) one story and **256** square feet or less in area*
- Fences (unless required as a swimming pool barrier)*
- Retaining walls used for landscaping purposes that are less than three feet in height and do not support a surge from any structures above (Note: Retaining wall systems composed of several tiers of individual retaining walls will require a permit if the upper wall is within two times the height of the lower wall and the overall height of the tiered retaining wall system is at least three feet.)*
- Concrete or masonry walls provided such walls do not exceed six feet in height*
- Re-roofing or new siding repairs
- Replacement of **256** square feet or less of roof decking (Note: Permits are required where the decking to be replaced was required at the time of original construction to be fire retardant-treated or protected in some other way to form a fire-rated wall termination. This case is mostly applicable to townhouses.)
- Concrete (patio) slabs on grade that are not designed to support a future building additions*
- Temporary ramps where the height of the entrance served by the ramp is no more than 30 inches above grade*
- Replacing windows and doors with windows and doors of similar operating and opening dimensions that do not require changes to the existing framed opening
- Re-glazing (glass replacement in the existing windows)
- Installation or replacement of cabinetry or trim
- Installation or replacement of floor finishes
- Painting (interior or exterior) and wallpapering
- Replacing gutters or downspouts

- Flagpoles 30 feet or less in height *
- Replacing existing plumbing fixtures (water closets, tubs, sinks, garbage disposals, etc.) where no alteration to the supply or drain/waste/vent systems are involved
- Installation of low-voltage wiring (under 50 volts - door bell, landscape lights or security system)
- Replacing existing light fixtures
- Replacing existing electrical appliances when replaced in the same location with units of similar capacity where no alteration to the electrical circuit is involved
- Replacing an electrical water heater with the same size heater in the same location
- Replacing an electric furnace, heat pump, or air conditioning condensing unit with the same type unit in the same location
- Repairing air-conditioners or furnaces by installing replacement parts
- Anything that is classified by the code as “ordinary repair”

*** Indicates that a Zoning Permit is required.**

Zoning Permit Examples:

- * Accessory Structures (Fences, Storage Buildings and Garages)
- * Carports
- * Concrete or Masonry Wall and Patios
- * Flagpoles
- * Signs
- * Home Occupations
- * Driveway Entrances
- * Propane Tanks
- * Swimming Pools under 150 sq ft, or 5000 gals ,or 24” deep
- * Temporary Construction or Sales Office Trailers
- * Ponds and Major Landscape Installations
- * Tents less than 900 square feet
- * Any setbacks for accessory structures (fences, storage buildings and tanks)