



## Building Permit Informational Guide

CITY OF NATIONAL CITY – BUILDING DIVISION  
1243 NATIONAL CITY BLVD. NATIONAL CITY, CA 91950  
(619) 336-4210 – BUILDING2NATIONALCITYCA.GOV

INFORMATION  
BULLETIN

**B-3**

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# INFORMATIONAL GUIDE FOR:

**PLAN CHECKING**

**BUILDING PERMITS**

**INSPECTIONS**

This guide provides general guidelines for submitting plans, obtaining permits and acquiring necessary inspections. It should be noted that this information is not intended to be specific for every individual case. The Development Services Group consists of the Building Division, Engineering Division, Planning Division and the Fire Department. These departments should always be contacted prior to commencing your plan preparation or work to assure the necessary requirements related to your project are known. Please be advised, each city's or jurisdiction's requirements vary. The City of National City utilizes the 2016 California Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Fire and Energy Codes along with the Current Edition of the International Building Code, the Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes, the National Electrical Code, as well as other applicable city and state codes, ordinances and regulations.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The purpose of obtaining the various permits and inspections required by the City is to assure the following:

- Compliance with the various codes utilized by the City;
- Construction is in accordance with the approved plans;
- Each phase of the construction is inspected and approved by the City building inspector;
- The work is performed in a safe and proper method in conformance with the plans and codes;
- Such work was finalized with all required inspections and the approved plans, and;
- Specifically to provide minimum standards related to the safeguard of life, health and property by regulating and controlling the design, quality of materials, location and construction of buildings and/or structures.

There may be certain projects within the city where plans must be reviewed and approved by the Engineering Division prior to the issuance of a building permit. Areas of concern would include the following:

- Off-site improvements within the public right-of-way such as street improvements, curb/gutter, sidewalk, and driveway, construction of retaining walls, sewer lateral installations and trench work.
- Sewer lateral installations and trench work shall be done by a contractor who possesses a Class A California State license and a National City business license.
- For these off-site improvements and other on-site improvements, such as grading and retaining wall work, a performance bond must be posted by the owner and a construction permit must be obtained from the Engineering Division.

CONSULT WITH THE ENGINEERING DIVISION PRIOR TO COMMENCING ANY WORK TO BE DONE WITHIN THESE AREAS.

## **OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS**

Projects involving the handling, sale or distribution of food or drink; equipment capable of emitting air contaminants; storing, handling and disposal of hazardous substances; etc., may require permits from the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health. Various projects may require the involvement of agencies outside of the City of National City Development Services, i.e. National School District and Sweetwater School District (for school fees), Sweetwater Authority, San Diego Gas & Electric, etc.

## **PLAN PREPARATION**

Plans submitted to the Building Department for plan review may be prepared by the property owner, an architect, engineer, building designer, draftsman or person skilled in plan preparation. However, plans prepared by those other than licensed architects or engineers are limited to one and two story buildings and/or structures of conventional construction. Conventional construction is defined as one and two story buildings and/or structures and accessory buildings designed for:

- Level property;
- Buildings which do not require structural engineering;
- Buildings which do not require special foundation design;
- Retaining walls which do not exceed three feet in height measured from the top of the footing to the top of the wall when no sur charge is present.

Construction drawings are required to be drawn to scale, and fully dimensioned. Plans may be submitted on graph paper, at scale of one inch equals twenty feet, 10 squares to an inch minimum; or on paper to an architect's scale of one-sixteenth, one-eighth or one-fourth inch equal one foot. **Four copies of all drawings must be submitted on paper a minimum size of 30" x 24". Sheet sizes for all plans must be uniform and print and contrast must be clear and legible.** When required, two copies of engineering calculations, energy computations and other information must be submitted.

**\*Exception: Plan sheets for signage and solar projects may be 11" X 17" in size. All fonts shall be size 16 or larger.**

## **THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO SUBMIT PLANS FOR PLAN REVIEW.**

### **COVER PAGE:**

- Vicinity Map- Map representing the generalized area surrounding a location.
- Site Plan- A site plan show the shape and dimensions of the parcel as well as all existing structures, including accessory structures, and location(s) of proposed work. The site plan must also show dimensions between structures within the property as well as from structures to the property line.
- Scope of Work- Clearly state the exact scope of work being proposed, including square footages.
- Assessor Parcel Number (APN)
- Owner Information- Name, address and contact information.
- Signature and contact information of person who prepared plans.
- Applicable building codes.

### **ADDITIONAL PAGES AND INFORMATION (WHEN APPLIACBLE)**

- Foundation plan and details
- Floor plan(s) (designating use of all areas, i.e. bedroom, bathroom, storage, etc.)
- Framing – including floor, roof, and wall framing

- Elevations - two sides minimum
- Construction section(s). (Indicate on floor plan where section occurs.)
- General details/notes and schedules
- California energy conservation standard calculations as promulgated for additions, alterations and all new buildings and/or structures; in Part 6 of Title 24, California Energy Code.
- Special details – when special conditions prevail related to foundation, cantilever beams, roof construction or any non-conventional construction methods or any special engineered requirements.

### **WHO MAY OBTAIN A PERMIT**

- Permits may be legally obtained by a contractor who is licensed by the State of California, licensed for a particular class of work, in possession of a valid National City business license and provides the City a copy of their valid Workers Compensation Insurance;
- Permits may be legally obtained by the property owner (owner/builder) for work on a single family dwelling if the owner/builder is qualified and personally performs all labor or acts as the General Contractor utilizing one of the following methods:
  1. Exclusively contracts with licensed contractors as mentioned above;
  2. His or her employees perform the work with wages as their sole compensation. If this method for performing the work is utilized the owner/builder must provide proof of worker's compensation insurance to cover all employees prior to the issuance of a permit.
  3. Generally, unless permits are applied for by a licensed contractor, the owner of the property must appear to sign the permit forms for owner/builder projects. Property owner may authorize an agent to act on his/her behalf. Authorization must be in writing addressed to National City Building Division and must be notarized.
  4. If a tenant is requesting to do the work themselves, they must provide a notarized letter from the property owner authorizing their tenant to act as owner/builder on the permit, and they understand that the tenant will physically doing the work. *Note: On an owner/builder permit, the property owner is responsible for work done on their property. Please be advised, some property owners will not allow their tenants to do any type of work at their rental/leased properties and require that all work be done by a licensed contractor.)*

**CAUTION:** As an owner/builder you assume the role of a general contractor. **You**, not your employees nor persons hired for labor, assume the responsibility for the overall project. This responsibility includes such things as taxes, materials and labor liens, workers compensation insurance, job completion and other legal liabilities related to the project.

## **BUILDING PERMITS REQUIRED**

A building permit must be obtained before starting any work except as referred to herein. Section 113.1, Appendix, Chapter 1 of the California Building Code states: "It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to erect, construct, alter, extend, repair, move, remove, demolish or occupy any building, structure or equipment regulated by this code, or cause same to be done, in conflict with or in violation of any of the provisions of the code". Separate permits are also required for electrical, mechanical and plumbing work, both new and repairs. Failure to obtain permits may constitute a violation of City ordinances. The Development Services Group should always be contacted for questions regarding permit requirements.

## **WORK EXEMPT FROM PERMIT**

Exemptions from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction. Permits shall not be required for the following:

### **Building:**

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet and is not attached to another structure
2. Fences not over 7 feet high
3. Oil derricks
4. Retaining walls that are not over 3 feet in height measured from the top of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids. (Permits for retaining walls are issued by Engineering Division)
5. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2:1.
6. Sidewalks and driveways less than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television, and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one and two-family dwellings.
12. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support of Group R-3 and U occupancies.

13. Non-fixed and moveable fixtures, cases, racks, counters, and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.
14. Playground, gymnastic and similar equipment and structures
15. Repairs to lawfully existing Group R Division 3 structures and Group U occupancy structures constructed pursuant to a building permit which involves only the replacement of component parts or existing work completed with similar materials only for the purpose of maintenance and do not affect any structural components or plumbing, mechanical or electrical installations. Repairs exempt from permit requirements shall not include any addition, change or modification in construction, exit facilities or permanent fixtures or equipment. Specifically exempt from permit requirements are:
  - (1) Painting and decorating including refinishing or exterior stucco finishes.
  - (2) Installation of floor covering.
  - (3) Cabinet work.
  - (4) Outside paving on private property, not within the public right-of-way.
16. Ground mounted satellite antennas not exceeding 10 feet in diameter and roof mounted satellite antennas not exceeding eight feet in diameter.
17. Painted wall signs and Styrofoam or other foam mounted wall signs.

#### **Electrical:**

**Repairs and maintenance:** Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps, or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

**Radio and television transmitting stations:** The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but do apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installation of towers and antennas.

**Temporary testing systems:** A permit shall not be required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

#### **Gas:**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.

#### **Mechanical**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.

**Plumbing:**

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with the new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspections made as provided for in this code.
2. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

**Emergency Repairs.** Where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted on the next business day to the building official.

**Repairs.** Application or notice to the building official is not required for ordinary repairs to structures, replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles. Such repairs shall not include the cutting away of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety.

**Public Service Agencies.** A permit shall not be required for the installation, alteration or repair of generation, transmission, distribution or metering or other related equipment that is under the ownership and control of public service agencies by established right.

**BUILDING PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Construction of any and all buildings and/or structures;
2. Repairs, remodels or alterations;
3. Any electrical, mechanical and/or plumbing repairs, remodels or alterations;
4. Fences over 7' (contact Planning Division for special review areas for fences over 4' in front yard setbacks).
5. Lath and stucco/plastering;
6. Swimming pools, spas, hot tubs, fountains;
7. Any solar installation;
8. Re-roofing involving tear-off of original roof;
9. All types of window replacements;
10. Demolition (This requirement will also insure that demolished structures are removed from the tax rolls.)

**IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT IF A BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED, PLEASE CONTACT THE BUILDING DIVISION AT (619) 336-4210.**

### **BUILDING PERMIT & PLAN REVIEW FEES**

The City of National City requires all projects proposed for construction and which require a plan review pay the Building Division Plan fee at the time of plan submittal. The plan review fee is based on square footage or construction valuation. Other permit fees are as follows:

**BUILDING PERMIT FEES** are generated from the 2013/2014 City of National City, building, engineering, and planning fee schedule. To obtain this information contact the Building Division at (619) 336-4210.

**PLAN CHECK FEES** for buildings are based on 40% of building permit fees for commercial/industrial/residential projects, excluding electrical, mechanical and plumbing plans.

**ELECTRICAL PERMIT FEES** are computed on the number of switches, light fixtures, receptacles and other electrical items proposed for installations as listed on the electrical permit fees form in the Building Division.

**MECHANICAL PERMIT FEES** are computed on the items as listed on the mechanical permit fees form and as proposed for installation.

**PLUMBING PERMIT FEES** are computed on the items as listed on the plumbing permit fees form and as proposed for installation.

**OTHER FEES** may include Energy, Microfilm, Access Plan check, SMIP, Park Fund and Sewer, Construction and Demolition, Transportation Development Impact and Planning Division, Fire and Engineering Division Plan Check.

### **EXPIRATION OF PLAN REVIEW**

Time limitation of plan check application. An application for a permit for any proposed work shall be deemed to have been abandoned six months after the date of filing, unless such application has been pursued in good faith or a permit has been issued; except that the building official is authorized to grant a maximum of three extensions for an additional time of three months each, provided there have been no changes to the plans and that no new codes have been adopted since the initial plan check was conducted. A fee equal to 25% of the initial plan check fee will be assessed for each plan check extension. The extension shall be requested in writing and justifiable cause demonstrated.

### **TYPE OF PERMITS**

**BUILDING PERMITS** are required for any new building and/or structure; repairs, alterations, additions, remodels, signs, retaining walls, masonry garden walls, roofing and re-roofing, moving of buildings, demolishing of building and structures; etc.



**ELECTRICAL PERMITS** are required when new wiring is installed, service panels are upgraded and or relocated (need SDG&E work order), when solar photovoltaic systems are installed or modified or unsafe wiring is replaced or repaired.

**PLUMBING PERMITS** are required for any new work, repairs, alterations, replacement of fixtures when trap is broken; any water, gas vent or waste lines, sewers, sewer-cap, lawn sprinkler, fire sprinkler systems, and other plumbing items;

**MECHANICAL PERMITS** are required for any new work, repairs, alterations, replacement to any mechanical equipment, air conditioning and heating equipment, duct work or other mechanical items;

**SWIMMING POOL, SPA, HOT TUB PERMITS** are required for any new work, repairs, alterations or replacement of any equipment;

**DEMOLITION PERMITS** are required for the removal of all buildings and structures;

**EXPIRATION OF PERMIT** Every permit issued by the City under the provisions of this code shall expire by limitation and become null and void if the building or work authorized by such permit is not commenced within six calendar months from the date of such permit, or if the building or work authorized by such permit is suspended or abandoned at any time after work has commenced for a period of six calendar months, or if the building or work authorized by such permit exceeds three calendar years from the issuance date of the permit. Work shall be presumed to be suspended or abandoned if the permittee has not obtained a required inspection approval of work by the City within each six month period upon commencement of work authorized by such permit.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING A BUILDING PERMIT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

- Submit to the Building Division four sets of plans and two of engineering calculations, energy computations, and any other supporting documentation, as required by the currently adopted Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, National Electrical Code and other applicable State, City and/or local codes.
- Complete an application, plan review form and any other required forms applicable to the project as provided by the Building Division. Pay filing and plan review fee.
- Plans are reviewed by the Development Services Group for compliance with the various State, City and/or other applicable codes and ordinances, and if corrections or revisions are necessary, the applicant will be notified.
- The corrections/revisions must be made by the individual who prepared the plans. All corrections can be made on the original tracings or new plans, with the required corrections and resubmitted for recheck. **Plans will only be rechecked over the counter if plan checker has designated it on the correction sheet and by appointment only. Otherwise, plans must be resubmitted for recheck.**

- After the plans have been approved, building permits signed and all fees have been paid, the project is ready to commence.

**The issuing of a permit or stamping of the plans and specifications “APPROVED”, shall not be held to permit or approve the violation of any law, even though a violation may have been overlooked when plans were checked.**

## **INSPECTIONS**

Upon obtaining a building permit you will also receive a Building Inspection Record and a set of approved plans. Maintain both the plans and the inspection record on the job site at all times and available for the inspector’s use. Inspections must be requested 24 hours in advance. It shall be the duty of the person doing the work authorized by a permit to notify the Building Division that such work is ready for inspection. It shall be the duty of the person requesting any required inspection to provide access to and means for inspection of such work. When the inspector has completed inspection of a particular phase of construction, for which an inspection has been required, he will sign if off on the inspection record, at which time the person doing the work may continue with the next phase of the project. However, if that phase of construction has not been constructed in accordance with the approved plans and/or to code, a correction notice will be posted on the job site. The person doing the work is responsible for making the corrections and shall request a re-inspection. AN INSPECTION PHONE LINE HAS BEEN SET UP. **PLEASE CALL (619) 336-4363 TO SCHEDULE ALL INSPECTIONS.**

### **THE FOLLOWING INSPECTIONS ARE THE MINIMUM AS REQUIRED BY CODE:**

1. FOOTINGS/REINFORCING/SETBACKS – When trenches are excavated, forms are set and reinforcing steel and hold down bolts are in place, prior to pouring of any concrete.
2. FRAMING – When all framing is completed including, fire blocking, bracing, roof sheathing (except where roofing is designed as a diaphragm) in place, all rough plumbing including vents, chimneys and piping is placed; all rough electrical, outlets electrical panels are in place; and all mechanical including ducts, shafts and piping is in place. (Note: gas lines to be under pressure and plumbing filled with water)
3. CONCRETE SLAB OR UNDER-FLOOR – When all in-slab or under-floor building service equipment, conduit, piping accessories and other ancillary equipment items are in place, but before any concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed, including sub-floor.
4. DIAPHRAGM/SHEAR – When framing is complete and shear walls and roof sheeting are in place, but before other trades such as electrical, plumbing or mechanical, are complete.
5. INSULATION – When completely installed in the required wall and ceiling or attic spaces, prior to concealment. (Insulation certificate will be accepted in lieu of this inspection for single-family dwellings or duplexes.)

6. LATH OR DRYWALL/GYPSUM BOARD – To be made after all lathing and drywall/gypsum board, interior and exterior, is in place, but before gypsum board joints and fasteners are taped and finished.
7. FINAL INSPECTION – When the building is completed including grading, landscaping, and other requirements of code or special conditions.

(SPECIAL INSPECTIONS may be required for various types of work.)

### **ELETRICAL INSPECTIONS**

- TEMPORARY POWER POLES – When pole is installed and prior to energizing.
- GROUNDWORK – When trenching is completed and conduit is placed.
- ROUGH WIRING – When all service equipment and wiring is in place, however, prior to concealment of any work.
- FIXTURES – When lath or drywall is applied, prior to applying final coat.
- FINAL – After all fixtures, receptacles, switches, sub-panels and circuits are identified and prior to energizing by the utility company.

### **PLUMBING INSPECTIONS**

- TOP OUT AND/OR ROUGH – When all drains, waste and vent piping is installed and under water pressure for test.
- SHOWER PAN – When shower pan and necessary piping has been completed and under water pressure for test.
- CONNECTING TO SEWER LINES – When all piping is completed and under water pressure for test.
- WATER HEATERS/VENTS – When heater is properly strapped, all vents and piping connections are completed and when pressure relief and/or temperature valves are installed.
- SPRINKLER SYSTEMS – When all piping and anti-siphon valves are installed.
- GAS TEST – When all piping and equipment is installed and under air pressure for test.
- FINAL – When the above piping, fixtures, equipment and vents have been completely installed/tested and the entire building system is ready for the utility company's service.

## **MECHANICAL INSPECTIONS**

- ROUGH HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING – When all ducts, dampers, piping, rough electrical is installed, however, prior to concealment.
- FINAL – When the above has been completed, installed/tested and the entire building system is ready for the utility company's service.

## **SWIMMING POOL/SPA/HOT TUBS INSPECTIONS**

- When the excavation is completed and reinforcing steel is placed.
- GROUND WORK – When the plumbing and electrical work is in and under water and/or air pressure for test.
- FENCES/GATES – When the gunite and all pool work is completed, but prior to any water in the pool.
- FINAL INSPECTION – When all work related to the pool/spa/hot tub is completed and ready for use.

## **FINAL OCCUPANCY INSPECTION – ALL BUILDING/STRUCTURES**

When all required construction has been completed and all City divisions involved have submitted their releases, a final inspection is made and a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Certificates of Occupancy are not issued for single family dwellings.

In addition to the above called inspections, the Building Official may make or require other inspections as may be deemed necessary.

No building or structure shall be used or occupied, and no change in the existing occupancy classification of a building or structure or portion thereof shall be made until all City divisions involved have approved, final inspection has been completed and signed-off by the inspector as Final and/or a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued.

## **QUESTIONS FOR INSPECTORS**

Field inspectors are available for answering questions related to projects under construction from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m., Monday through Thursday.

**CAUTION**

The information contained herein is intended only as a guide. When in doubt, always consult the Development Services Group, 1243 National City Boulevard, National City, CA 91950 at the following numbers:

**Development Services Department**

Building Division	336-4210
Engineering Division	336-4380
Planning Division	336-4310
Fire Marshal	336-4550