

Keep this brochure for reference.

Laws do change, so if you pull this out of a drawer months or years from when you received it, check with the Community Development Department about possible new regulations. For permits or information, office hours are:

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please call the Community Development Department for more information on the following statistics:

1. Lot Coverage
2. Building height
3. Fence height



City of Chowchilla

Community Development
Department

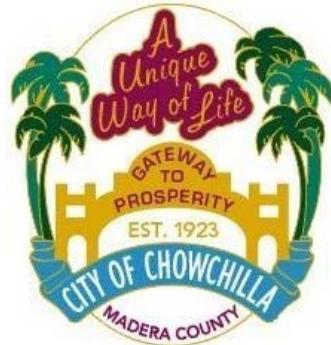
130 S. Second St.
Civic Center Plaza
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Phone: 559-665-8615
Fax: 559-665-7419
www.ci.chowchilla.ca.us



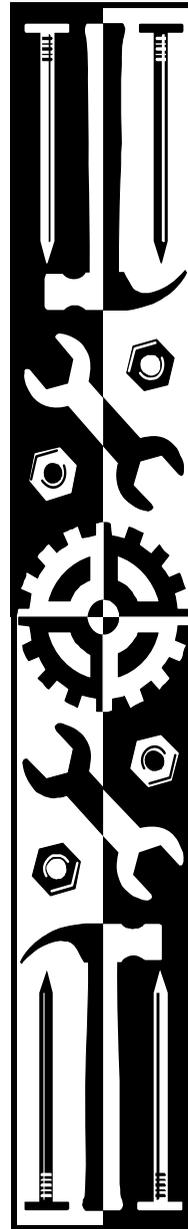
Business Owner Guide

*Construction Permit
Tips For Business
Owners*



City of Chowchilla

Building Division



**CONSTRUCTION
PERMITS**

Easier to
get than
you might
think.

Be safe,
smart and
secure.

Business owners thinking about remodeling or making other improvements to their business, many times have a number of questions about building permits.

This handout is designed to give business owners basic knowledge of when construction permits are required in the City of Chowchilla. It also answers some of the most frequently asked questions and offers tips from the City of Chowchilla Building Department.

Since each construction project is unique, we invite you to telephone the building department at (559) 665-8615 for answers to your specific questions.

What are permits and why do I need one?

Permits are the way the City of Chowchilla regulates construction. This regulation is designed to ensure that all construction in the city is safe. The safety of all the occupants of buildings is the primary reason for having construction codes. The City of Chowchilla has adopted several codes, among them the California Building Code, Mechanical, Plumbing and National Electrical codes. In addition, there are federal, state and local laws that govern construction, such as those covering energy conservation.

There are several different types of permits, based on the type of construction: structural, plumbing, mechanical or combination of any of these. Most business owner projects require a combination permit for the work to be started. In addition, the complete demolition and relocation of buildings also require permits.

Obtaining the permit is just the first step in the process. In this step, you may need to create plans to be submitted to the department, make a plot plan for your property showing the improvements, and show the type of construction you'll be using.

The Building Department has handouts to help you through this process.

Once plans are approved, you're required to build the project according to those plans. If any changes are made to the plans, they must be made with the department's approval.

The second half of the process is the inspection of the work. *More on that later.*

When do I need a construction permit?

A construction permit is needed for all new construction. In many cases, a permit is needed for repair or replacement of existing features, such as replacing windows. A plumbing, electrical or mechanical permit is required for any additions or changes to the structure's existing system; for example, moving or adding an electrical outlet requires a permit.

When don't I need a permit?

A construction permit is not required for items such as wallpapering, painting, or similar finish work, fences six feet high or lower, platforms and walks 30 inches high or less over grade or not over a basement, and in several other cases. However, permits may be required by the Building Division of the Community Development Department or other agencies; check before building.

For plumbing, mechanical and electrical work, replacement or repair of fixtures (such as changing a water faucet or replacing switches) does not normally require a permit. Replacing a water heater or installing a garden sprinkler system does, however require a permit.

Where do I get a permit?

Construction permits are issued at the Chowchilla Civic Center located at 130 S Second St., Civic Center Plaza, Chowchilla, CA 93610.

How long does it take to get a permit?

Permit issuance periods vary. Some permits can be issued over the counter, meaning return trips will not be necessary. Some projects require that plans be left for additional review.

What about zoning?

Zoning sets up, within a defined area, the types of buildings and what they will be used for.

Zoning is regulated by the City's Planning Department, based on maps approved by the City Council.

In addition, some zoning questions can be answered by the Building Department staff at the time of permit application and/or plan submittal.

The Planning Division of the Community Development Department is located at the Civic Center.

What about other approvals or permits?

Other City or government agencies may need to review and approve your project. The Building Department will inform you of these approvals when plans are submitted.

What if I obtained a permit but never had any inspections?

Generally, permits expire after 180 days if no inspections have been made. In order for the project to be completed, it must be inspected. If a permit expires before the final inspection is made, the project is in violation of City code.

Can I do the work myself or do I have to hire a contractor?

Property owners can do the work themselves, but they must follow certain regulations. Among them:

Workers' Compensation: If you will be hiring anyone, you may have to have Workers' Compensation Insurance. This insurance is available from many agencies. If you won't be hiring anyone, we'll ask you to sign an "Owner-Builder Declaration" indicating this.

Build to the Plans: Be sure to follow your approved plans, whether they are drawn by an architect or are standard construction requirements given to you by the Building Department. If you deviate from the approved plans, this will cause problems when the project is inspected.

Who draws up the Plans?

Plans for projects such as room additions can usually be drawn up by a qualified individual such as a draftsman. Other projects may require plans signed by a licensed architect or engineer.

For projects such as routine retaining walls, patio covers or carports, the City has standard specifications that can be followed, within certain limitations. Those specifications, together with a plot plan showing the project, are accepted by the Building Department as the plans.

In addition, some kit-type projects come with construction plans. When you apply for permits, bring the instruction sheets along - they can serve as plans.

What about a contractor?

The City recommends you deal only with a contractor licensed by the State of California. The State Contractor Licensing Board toll-free telephone number is 1-800-321-2752 or visit their website at: www.cslb.ca.gov

What about inspections?

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or contractor to call us for inspections at specific times during construction. Inspections are made during certain points in the project, depending on the type of project. (Note: The City requires a 24 hour notice prior to inspections.)

For example, retaining walls require inspections of the footing, after block is laid and steel placed but before grouting, after back fill has been placed, and when the project is complete.

Remember... the project is not complete for legal purposes until it has passed the final inspection.