

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **"Why do I need a permit?"**

The permit and inspection process give you, your neighbors, and the City assurance that specific standards are met when expanding, altering, or repairing your property by complying with State Codes, Local Codes and Zoning Requirements. These standards are based on well-established health, safety, and environmental considerations intended to protect the integrity of the building, the safety of its inhabitants, and the welfare of the public. Projects not completed according to code can affect your homes insurability and potential sale.

### **"When do I need a permit?"**

A permit is required prior to beginning any new construction, repairs, additions, alterations, and demolitions, including the installation of new heating equipment, electrical wiring, plumbing fixtures, garages, porches, fences, decks, pools, signs. A permit is also required to change use of a building or portion thereof, replace or move walls, doors, columns, and beams. Changes to required exits or means of providing natural light and ventilation (including windows) require a permit.

Certain small projects may be allowed without a permit provided the information is recorded and approval given by the building inspector. Questions about when a permit is needed should be directed to the building inspector, located at City Hall, or at 920-210-6351

### **"Who is responsible for obtaining a permit?"**

The property owner is responsible for ensuring that a permit is obtained prior to work being started. Contractors can also apply and obtain permits on behalf of the property owner. Under no circumstances can construction or demolition start prior to obtaining the building permit and posting the placard in a front window or door visible from the road.

### **"Do I need to hire a professional Architect, Engineer or Contractor to do the work?"**

Unless otherwise specified by the building code, owner-occupants of single-family homes may prepare their own plans. All residential work must demonstrate compliance with the Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code (UDC) and the City of Berlin Municipal Code.

Depending on the type of work you are doing, you may or may not be required to hire a contractor. An owner-occupant of a single-family home may take responsibility for carpentry, electrical, plumbing or heating work. Any work you may undertake will be inspected and shall meet the requirements of the codes. Should it appear that the scope of the work appears to be too great for the homeowner, the inspector may request you obtain professional assistance.

### **"Are there avenues to pursue if I have concerns regarding my contractor?"**

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection can be reached toll free at 1-800-422-7128.

### **"What do I do if I cannot comply with City of Berlin zoning requirements?"**

A zoning variance can be applied for at City Hall. An application for appeal may be made when it is claimed that the true intent of the code cannot be met, such as an unnecessary hardship. All appeals shall be accompanied by supporting data.

### **"What is an Unnecessary Hardship?"**

An unnecessary hardship means that no feasible use can be made of the property without the granting of the variance, that the hardship is something unique to this property and not the owner of the property, that the hardship is not self-created, and the hardship is not economic.

### **"What is the cost to apply for a variance?"**

When applying for a variance from the City of Berlin a fee of \$200.00 is required to be submitted with the application and supporting data. Any questions should go to the Zoning Administrator (920) 361-5156.

### **"What are the requirements for a fence in the City of Berlin?"**

A building permit is required for all fences. The finished side of a fence shall always face the neighboring property. Fences shall be maintained in a condition of reasonable repair. Fences on side or rear lot lines may be as high as 6' (note: verify with Zoning Ordinance for relevant district) A fence in the front yard shall not exceed four feet in height or thirty inches if within 10 feet of a driveway or street intersection. A corner lot is deemed to have two front yards. In no case, shall a fence or similar barrier impede vehicular vision or cause a hazardous condition to exist. All fences shall be placed up to the property line, but not over it.

### **"What information is required to obtain a permit for a new building?"**

A certified survey of your property that shows where the building will be constructed, or for smaller projects (garages, sheds, pools, fences etc.) a plot plan that shows the following.

- \*The size and configuration of your lot. All boundary lines must be shown and dimensioned.
- \*The location of all buildings and structures on your property, labeled as to use and whether "existing" or "proposed".
- \*The location and names of all abutting streets and alleys.
- \*The location of all existing and proposed driveways. When dealing with work in the City right of way may require contacting the Public Works Director for permits and specifications.
- \*The distance of all buildings and structures from abutting street property lines.
- \*Depending on the type of work, a complete set of plans will be required. Call inspector to determine plans needed for a particular project. Most small additions, garages, and sheds will only require a plot plan.
- \*Estimated costs of the project, to include labor even if you are doing the project yourself.
- \*A list of all the contractors, with appropriate license numbers when required.

All projects are different in the information required, it is suggested you talk with the building inspector to determine the exact requirements and information necessary to obtain permits for your project.

Building Inspector 920-210-6351 Office hours for information or permits:  
Mondays 8:30-10:30 A.M., Wednesdays (summer months) 8:30-10:30 A.M.