

Advantages of Building Permits for Homes¹

Municipal by-laws and provincial legislation state that building permits are required for most new construction, renovations, and demolition projects in New Brunswick. A building permit is formal permission from your local authority to start your construction project. The plans review, building permit, and inspection process protects each homeowner's interests, as well as those of the community. It also **ensures that all construction is safe, legal, and sound.**

In order to be aware of one's responsibilities and the applicable rules, **always** contact your local municipality or district planning commission **well in advance of any construction on any property.**

There are several *significant advantages* of **building permits** and other construction related permits such as electrical, plumbing, and natural gas permits (and septic tank and well approvals in unserved areas) **before** starting construction:

- It will ensure that construction in your community complies with the zoning by-law, including proper land use and appropriate set backs from the property lines
- It will ensure that your drawings, plans, and specifications will be reviewed by qualified professionals to ensure required codes and local by-laws are being followed
- It will ensure compliance with all required codes and local by-laws by having qualified inspectors on-site at appropriate stages of construction
- It will **improve safety** for you, your family, visitors to your home, and future owners of your home
- Obtaining the services and advice of qualified professionals will ensure that your building is constructed properly **the first time, which will result in savings**
- Your home's **dollar value can increase** and **liabilities can be decreased** when you show prospective buyers that all required permits and inspections are completed
- **It is the law!** Most jurisdictions have significant penalties for not obtaining permits or for starting construction without permits. Working without a permit may cause you to lose your investment

When hiring a contractor, ask to see all required permits prior to starting any work. Permits must be posted on the construction site. Building permits help assure you that your home will be properly inspected. You may also want to enquire about liability insurance and ask for references. Asking to see these prior to work being done is your assurance of your safety and protection. A little leg work at the beginning of a project can save you from potential problems in the future!

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¹ The authors have used the expression "homes" for the purposes of this article, but it applies to other buildings as well