

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: "Where is the Building and Safety Division located?"

A: The Building and Safety Division is located on the second floor of City Hall, at 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard.

Q: "Which codes are used by the City of West Hollywood?"

A: The following Codes became effective on January 1, 2011:

- 2010 California Building Code (based on the 2009 International Building Code) with 2011 Edition County of Los Angeles Building Code Amendments
- 2010 California Residential Code (based on the 2009 International Residential Code) with 2011 Edition County of Los Angeles Residential Code Amendments
- 2010 California Green Building Standards Code with 2011 Edition County of Los Angeles Green Building Standards Amendments
- 2010 California Mechanical Code (based on the 2009 Uniform Mechanical Code) 2010 California Electrical Code (based on the 2008 National Electrical Code) 2010 California Plumbing Code (based on 2009 Uniform Plumbing Code)
- 2010 California Energy Code

Q: "How do I schedule an inspection?"

A: The most convenient method is to use the inspection request phone line: (323) 848-6335. Requests for inspections may be made in person during public counter hours. All inspection requests received by midnight will be scheduled for the next day.

Q: "When is a Building Permit required?"

A: Section 106.1 of the West Hollywood Building Code states that "no person shall erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, remove, connect, convert, demolish, or equip any building, structure, or portion thereof without first obtaining a separate permit for each such building or structure... from the building official."

Section 106.3 of the West Hollywood Building Code exempts the following items from building permits:

- A one-story, detached residential accessory building, used as a tool shed, storage shed, playhouse, or for a similar use, provided the projected roof area does not exceed 120 square feet and the height does not exceed 12 feet. (Planning Division is required)
- Fences and walls not over 6 feet in height.
- Retaining walls that do not support more than 3 feet of earth, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding flammable liquids.
- Flagpoles not erected upon a building and not more than 15 feet in height.
- Canopies or awnings attached to a residential building or a residential accessory building and not extending more than 54 inches from the exterior wall of the building (and not encroaching into yard setback areas).
- Light standards not over 30 feet in height (although electrical permits are required for the wiring of light standards).
- Playground equipment.

NOTE: Although the above listed items do not require permits from the Building and Safety Division, you must obtain approval from the Planning Division prior to installation or construction of the listed items.

Q: "When is an Electrical Permit required?"

A: Section 82-4 of the West Hollywood Electrical Code states that "no person shall install, alter, reconstruct or repair any electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus, or equipment, within or on any building, structure, or premises without first obtaining a permit?" except as follows:

- Minor repair work such as the replacement of lamps, switches, receptacles, sockets, and the like.
- Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus, or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
- Temporary Christmas decorative lighting.
- Replacement of overcurrent devices (circuit breakers) of the same type and the same rating.
- Private telephone, intercom, sound and communication systems, provided, however, that a permit shall be obtained for the power supplies required by the above systems.

Q: "When is a Plumbing Permit required?"

A: Section 103.1.1 of the West Hollywood Plumbing Code states that "it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to make any installation, alteration, repair, replacement or remodel any plumbing system regulated by this Code except as permitted in Section 103.1.2, or cause the same to be done without first obtaining a separate plumbing permit for each separate building or structure."

A plumbing permit shall not be required for the following work:

- The repair of leaks or clearing of stoppages in drain, soil, waste, or vent piping, provided that, should such piping need to be replaced a permit is required and an inspection shall be made.
- The repairing of leaks in water piping, valves or fixtures.

Q: "When is a Mechanical Permit required?"

A: Section 111.1 of the west Hollywood Mechanical Code states that "no person shall install, alter, reconstruct or repair any heating, ventilating, comfort cooling, or refrigeration equipment unless a permit therefore has first been obtained from the Building Official."

No permit shall be required for the following:

- Any portable heating appliance
- Any portable ventilating appliance
- Any portable comfort cooling unit.
- Replacement of any component part or assembly of an appliance which does not alter its original approval and complies with other applicable requirements of the Mechanical Code.
- Any unit refrigeration system.

Q: "How much does a permit cost?"

A:

- Each type of permit, building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, grading, swimming pool, and miscellaneous, is charged a processing fee of \$38.60.
- Building permit fees are based on the valuation of the work to be done. Valuation is based on current construction cost estimates, provided through research conducted by model code organizations such as the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO). The amount of a valid, executed contract may also serve as the determination of the valuation.
- Electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits are charged on a per item basis. For example, a plumbing permit will be charged \$22.60 for each plumbing fixture; kitchen sink, water heater, toilet, shower, etc.; a mechanical permit will be charged \$37.60 for each furnace, wall heater, floor heater, air conditioner, etc.; and electrical permits are charged fixed amounts for various installations such as services, sub-panels, appliances, etc. (except that electrical permits for new residential buildings are charged by a fixed amount per square foot).
- Grading permit fees are based on the larger of the cut or fill volume in cubic yards.
- Miscellaneous permits are issued for occupancy use changes, special events, legalization of units, and such. Fees not specifically listed in the fee schedule are charged on an hourly estimate.
- Swimming pool valuations are calculated by a predetermined cost per square foot.

Q: "How long does plan review/re-check take?"

A: All projects required to be submitted for plan check are reviewed in order of their submittal date. In most cases Staff will contact you within 4-6 weeks of submittal date.

Q: "Is there an expedited process?"

A: The City of West Hollywood does not have expedited services.

Q: "How long is a plan check application valid for?"

A: Per the 2010 California Building Code, Section 106.4.1.1, "When no permit is issued within one year following the date of the application therefore, the application shall automatically expire. Plans and specifications previously submitted may thereafter be returned to the applicant or destroyed by the building official. The building official may grant up to two extensions not exceeding 180 days per extension, beyond the initial one-year limit upon written request by the applicant showing that circumstances beyond the control of the applicant have prevented action from being taken and upon payment of an extension fee as determined by the building official, not to exceed 25 percent of the plan check fee.

Once an application and any extension(s) have expired, the applicant shall resubmit plans and specifications and pay a new plan checking or review fee.

Please contact us at 323-848-6320 for more information.

Q: "How long is a building permit valid for?"

A: Per the 2010 California Building Code, Section 106.5.4, "Every permit issued by the building official [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 180 days from the date of such permit, or if the building or work authorized by such permit is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 180 days. Before such work can be commenced or recommenced, a new permit shall be first obtained, and the fee therefore shall be one-half of the amount required for a new permit for such work, provided no changes have been made or will be made in the original plans and specifications for such work; and provided, further, that the duration of such failure to commence, suspension or abandonment has not exceeded one year.

Any permittee holding an unexpired permit may apply for an extension of time within which work may commence under that permit. The building official may extend the time for action by the permittee for a period not exceeding 180 days on written request and payment of a fee in an amount determined by the building official, not to exceed 25 percent of the permit fee. No permit shall be extended more than twice.

In order to renew action on a permit after expiration, except as provided for above, the permittee shall pay a new full permit fee.

Q: "How can I get a question or issue concerning permit status, inspection, code, etc. resolved?"

A: You can refer to our "Staff Directory" or visit our public counter during our business hours.

Q: "Are there any other departments I have to contact?"

A: Some projects may require other City and outside agencies' review and approval. Please contact your project planner, plan checker, or Building & Safety staff at 323-848-6320.