



Frequently Asked Questions – Building Permits & Inspections

1. Do I need a permit for my project?

Most construction work requires a permit, including new homes, additions, remodels, structural changes, accessory structures, electrical/plumbing/HVAC upgrades, decks, basement finishes, and alterations that change the building's footprint or use.

Most, but not all municipalities, require a permit for roof, window and siding replacements. Call (920) 392-5150 or email msa_buildinginspection@msa-ps.com for your local requirements

Minor cosmetic work—painting, flooring, cabinets, or fixtures—typically does not require a permit.

2. How long does the permit review take?

Permit review may take **up to 10 business days** once **all required documents** and zoning approvals are received. Incomplete applications will delay review.

3. What documents do I need to submit with my permit application?

Commonly required documents include:

- Site plan
 - House plans (foundation, floor plans, elevations)
 - Structural details and wall bracing (SPS 321.25)
 - Cross-section
 - Deck worksheet (if applicable)
 - Energy code documentation (SPS 322)
 - Truss specs and foundation details
 - MEP (Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing) scope of work
- Requirements vary by project type.

4. How much does a permit cost?

Permit fees **vary by municipality**. You should check the municipality's website for the current fee schedule. Once your permit is approved, the inspector will contact you with the appropriate fee.

5. Do I need zoning approval first?

Yes. Most projects require zoning review to verify:

- Setbacks
 - Lot coverage
 - Height
 - Use classification
 - Floodplain or shoreland restrictions
- Permit review does not begin until zoning clearance is complete.

6. When can I start construction?

You may **not** begin work until:

- The permit is officially **approved**
- All fees are **paid**
- You have received the **issued** permit and posted it on-site

Starting without a permit may result in stop-work orders, double permit fees and fines.

7. How do I schedule an inspection?

Visit your CivicPlus dashboard at

https://www.civicgov4.com/wi_msaprofessional/portal/index.php?r=site/dashboard, **select my permits, inspect**. You will be able to select up to 3 date options; the inspector will reach out to confirm the requested inspection date and time. Most municipalities require:

- **At least 48 hours' notice** for inspection requests
 - A specific window of availability
- Work must be **exposed** and accessible at the time of inspection.

8. What inspections are required?

Based on SPS 320.10 & 320.12, common inspections include:

- Footings
 - Foundation walls & waterproofing/draintile
 - Underground plumbing **with Air or Water Test**
 - Rough plumbing (with air test), HVAC, and electrical
 - Rough framing & wall bracing
 - Insulation/energy inspection
 - Final inspections for plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and building/occupancy
- Commercial projects may have additional inspections.

9. What happens if I cover work before an inspection?

If work is covered without inspection:

- You may be required to **uncover** the work
- Additional fees may apply
- The project may be delayed
Inspectors must verify all code-required work before it is concealed

10. Can I submit my plans electronically?

Yes. All applications and documents can be uploaded through the online permitting portal. PDFs must be legible and scaled.

11. Can I revise my plans after submitting them?

Yes, but revised plans:

- Must be uploaded through the portal
- May require re-review
- Can extend the approval timeline

Contractors should avoid starting work based on unapproved changes.

12. How long is my permit valid?

Most permits are valid for **24 months** from the date of issuance, but rules vary by municipality. Work must remain **active** during this period. Stalled or abandoned projects may require renewal.

13. Who is responsible for calling inspections—the homeowner or contractor?

Typically, the **contractor** is responsible for inspection scheduling unless the homeowner is completing their own work.

The person doing the work should request the inspection.

14. What if I fail an inspection?

The inspector will document the correction items. You will need to:

- Make required corrections
- Schedule a re-inspection
Some municipalities charge a re-inspection fee.

15. Do I need a permit for replacing mechanical equipment?

Yes, except for simple like-for-like replacements in some municipalities. Typically required:

- HVAC permits for furnaces, AC units, gas piping
- Electrical permits for service upgrades
- Plumbing permits for water heater or piping changes

16. Do deck or shed projects require permits?

Yes, if they exceed size thresholds, attach to the house, or require footings.

A site plan, footing details, and a deck worksheet are commonly required. Some municipalities require separate zoning approval for decks. Reach out to your municipality for local requirements

17. Will the inspector come inside my home?

Yes—any time interior work requires verification. Inspectors will coordinate access, and an adult must be present.

18. What if my property is in a floodplain or shoreland zone?

Additional county approvals may be required, including:

- Floodplain permits
- Shoreland zoning
- Setback exceptions
These approvals must be completed **before** permit review.

19. Can my permit be denied?

Yes, if:

- Required documents are missing
- Zoning does not allow the proposed work
- Work violates state SPS codes
- Plans do not meet structural, energy, or safety requirements

The reviewer will explain what corrections are needed.

20. Where do I submit my application?

All permits must be submitted through the MSA permitting portal:

https://www.civicgov4.com/wi_msaprofessional/portal/index.php?r=portalPosts/view&id=2