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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

# Residential Building Permit Process

Assistance Bulletin

# #23

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**Keyword: Assistance Bulletins**

**Q:** What happens to my application during the county's Residential Building Permit review process?

**A:** The general steps of the review process are outlined below. Please be advised, however, that projects needing variances, major structural revisions or adjustments for Snohomish County Health Department approval, Critical Area Regulations (CAR), SEPA, or Drainage requirements will involve additional review time and steps.

## Step 1—Preparation

You or your agent must:

- Review the PDS [Residential Building Permit Requirements](#) webpage. Here you will find links under the “How To Guide” for the residential permit application checklist, and more information on the required submittal documents for residential permit applications.
- If the permit is proposed in a flood hazard area, surveyed existing ground elevations of the four corners of the proposed development shall be submitted with the plan review application. Existing and finish grade elevations shall be shown on the elevation sheet of structural plans. See PDS [Bulletin #42](#), Flood Hazard Areas, or the [Flood Hazard web page](#) for further information. We recommend a Residential Pre-Application for residential building projects in a flood hazard area.
- Contact the Snohomish County Health Department at (425-339-5250) regarding septic tank requirements for the proposed project for lots not served by sewers. The Snohomish County Health Department must approve plans for new construction, additions and some remodel projects to ensure that water supply and waste disposal methods meet health code requirements. Visit [Septic Permitting | Snohomish Health District, WA \(snohd.org\)](#) for more information.
- Contact the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, Electrical Division at (425-290-1309) regarding an electrical permit. Snohomish County PDS does not issue permits for, or inspect, any electrical work.

## Step 2—Application

Permit applications should be submitted online at [MyBuildingPermit.com](#). For information on using our online permitting system, please see the following web page: <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/3920/Online-Permitting>. If you need additional assistance with the online process, please call our office at 425-388-3311.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

### Step 3—Screening

PDS staff will:

- Check that the permit path chosen on MyBuildingPermit.com matches the building proposed.
- Compare documents provided to submittal checklists and determine if the appropriate and necessary documents have been provided.
- Quick check that the documents provided are adequate for review (legible and “unlocked”).
- If the application materials are appropriate for the application type and are adequate for review, the application will be accepted and moved to the intake process.

### Step 4—Intake

PDS staff will:

- Assess appropriate application and review fees based on the application and upload an invoice to your account on MyBuildingPermit.com.
- Provide a .pdf copy of the invoice that includes an *estimate* of fees due when the permit is ready to issue.
- Assign reviewers to evaluate your project. These typically include planning/land use, structural plans and critical area/site reviewers; others will be assigned as needed.
- The Snohomish County Health Department is assigned to review projects on properties serviced by an on-site septic system or proposed septic system.

You must:

- Pay the invoiced fees to move the application into the review process.

### Step 5—Review

Review times can vary based on application type and numbers of applications in review. 2-3 months is not unusual for 1st review completion. During the review process, you or your agent may check the status of your permit by using the “Check Status” feature on MyBuildingPermit.com.

PDS staff will:

- Verify compliance with zoning regulations and note conditions required for approval.
- Verify that the correct fees were collected at submittal and determine if there are applicable park, school, road or other mitigation fees to be collected.
- Compare the submitted plans to standard building and mechanical codes.
- If Critical Area review is assigned, a PDS site reviewer may visit your property to review site conditions.
- PDS will upload a letter and possibly plan mark-ups with details of concerns identified during review. This letter is provided when *all PDS reviewers* have completed their evaluations of the proposal.
- The Snohomish County Health Department will typically provide their comments directly to the property owner.
- When drainage review is required, it is conducted as part of a separate permit—Land Disturbing Activity (LDA) See [Assistance Bulletin #87](#).

You must:

- Respond to the Review Completion Letter by uploading the revised or additional documents requested.
  - Respond to Snohomish County Health Department requests directly AND also by uploading that information to the online folder on MyBuildingPermit.com
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## Step 6—Permit Issuance

You must:

- Record documents if required as conditions of approval. [See Assistance Bulletin #99](#)
- Obtain other permits required as conditions of approval (e.g., LDA, ACUP, or other permitting).
- Pay the issuance fees (these could differ from the *estimate* provided at intake).

PDS staff will:

- Provide an invoice for the issuance fees; these may differ from the *estimate* provided at intake. The park, school, road or other applicable mitigation fees will be included on this invoice.
- Issue the building permit upon completion of all conditions of approval and collection of all remaining fees.
- Provide via upload to the project folder: Issued Permit, Inspection Card, Approved Structural and Site Plans, and other documents required to be on-site with the issued permit.

## Step 7—Construction

You or your agent must:

- Print out a copy of all approved documents (permit, calculations, construction plans, etc.) and have these available at the job site for the inspectors. Note that all plans must be printed at full size to scale (generally 22x34).
- Post the inspection card at the construction site.
- During construction, schedule your inspections through MyBuildingPermit.com. You may refer to PDS [Bulletin #25](#), Residential Inspections, for more details.
- Contact the Snohomish County Health Department for septic tank and drain field inspection, if applicable. You may schedule the septic inspection online at [onlineRME - Responsible Management Entity](#).
- Call the Department of Labor and Industries Electrical Division (425-290-1309) to inspect wiring prior to framing inspection.
- Make any corrections necessary for final approvals.

### Q: What can I do to make sure my building permit application is complete?

**A:** The most important thing you can do is to be sure your plans comply with county building codes, and provide neat, accurate, and detailed information when you first apply. Each county staff member who must review your application relies on accurate information from you in order to determine if your plans meet all requirements for residential construction. If you are careful to provide this information when you first submit your application, you can expect it to be processed in a minimum amount of time. The length of time required to process an application varies. Review times for applications filed during spring and summer months typically can take longer due to higher activity levels.

### Q: When does my permit expire?

**A:** Once the permit is issued, the permit is valid for 18 months. If you have not completed construction within that time frame, you must renew the permit before it expires. You can renew your permit before it expires and it is good for another 18 months. It can only be renewed one time. The fee for the permit extension includes a percentage of the original permit fee equal to the percentage of work to be completed. To renew a permit, call 425-388-3311 and you can renew the application with a Permit Technician. They will issue a new permit with the updated expiration dates.

See [Bulletin #71](#) for information on Expired Permits.