

Section F – BUILDING DEPARTMENT

1) Do I need a permit?

The Building Code specifically exempts certain activity from requiring a permit such as wall finish i.e. paint, wallpaper, ceramic tile, cabinet replacement. If the remodeling activity is governed or regulated by the code a permit is required to erect, change or alter. We recommend a call to the building inspector's office if in doubt.

2) Is a copy of the building code available online?

Copies of the building code can be purchased from the International Code Council at www.iccsafe.org. Please be sure you are ordering the current applicable code.

3) Is there a Town of New Canaan Building Code?

No, there is no Town of New Canaan Building Code only a Connecticut State Building Code.

4) What if my circumstances or conditions are such that it is infeasible, or creates a hardship to comply with the building code?

Request for modification forms are available in the Building Department which can be forwarded by the local building official for approval by the State Building Inspector.

5) Do I need to be a licensed contractor to work on my own home?

No, the owner of a single family owner occupied dwelling does not need to be licensed to work on his/her home. All permit requirements and inspections must still be satisfied. Beware of unlicensed contractors that recommend you pull a "homeowner permit" so they can perform the work.

6) Can I file for my own permit and act as my own general contractor then subcontract to others?

Yes, be advised that in doing this you will be responsible for verifying compliance with the State of Connecticut's workers compensation requirements from all your subcontractors. The contractors that you subcontract to must be licensed.

7) Who can apply for a building permit?

Any building owner or their authorized agent can apply, you must provide written authorization.

8) What inspections are required during construction?

There is a list of required inspection available at the building department.

9) Can I change contractors in the middle of my project?

Yes, the owner can change contractors as they wish provided they do so in writing to the building official.

10) Which construction documents or drawings are subject to the provisions of the “Freedom of Information Act?”

ALL construction documents and drawings are available to the public upon request, including but not limited to building permits, permit applications, blue prints, inspection history, and certificates of occupancy.

11) How can I find out if it is possible to install a swimming pool on my property, or construct an addition?

Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered without first asking several questions of each land use office. We will need to know the zone you are located in to determine setback requirements, location if any of wetlands or watercourses, and the location of your septic system which will almost certainly require soil tests, the answer to these questions may prompt more questions or prerequisites.

12) Can I check online to see if my neighbor has a permit for work they are presently doing?

Utilize the Building Permits Inquiry module and search by address.

13) How do I file a complaint?

Come to our office and fill out a complaint form, if you are not able to come to the office we can do this via email. With the exception of hazardous conditions, we do not take action on anonymous complaints.

14) Who is responsible for correcting code violations on my house?

Code violations are attached to the structure and are the responsibility of the owner of the property.

15) What if work was done to my home without the required permit?

An “after the fact” permit will need to be applied for and will go through the same review and approval process, there is no “grandfathering” for work done without a

permit. If code violations exist they will need to be corrected before the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

16) What if one land use department approves my proposed construction but another denies my application?

Each of the land use departments has a very different area of regulatory authority with differing applicable codes, standards and regulations. Before a permit or certificate of occupancy can be issued you must satisfy all the applicable requirements for all of the land use offices having jurisdiction.

17) How long is a building permit valid for?

Building permits are valid indefinitely provided there is continued forward progress regardless of how slowly the project may progress. If the project is completely dormant for 6 months consecutively we can expire the permit.

18) Are there time restrictions for construction and noise?

The Town of New Canaan does have a noise ordinance which is available online and is enforced by the New Canaan Police Dept. Construction times are not regulated however the noise is.

19) What happens if there is a conflict between the codes or regulations from one land use department to another?

All codes, requirements, and regulations must be complied with, a true conflict only occurs when the provisions of one make it impossible to comply with the other. Should a true conflict occur the more stringent shall always prevail. The hierarchy of documents is as follows; CT General Statute, CT State Building and Health Codes, town ordinance, town zoning regulations, town wetland regulations, town policy. (All town ordinances must have an enabling statute.)