

The Harding Township Civic Association is providing this special report to respond to residents' questions about the process to secure a building permit in our Township:

The Harding building/ construction permit process is based on both New Jersey law as well as local regulations reflecting the very special nature of our fine community. Because we have many large residential lots, a natural rustic environment, many water wells and few sewers, the permitting process is more complicated and rigorous than for communities served by public water supply and sewer systems.

First, not all home improvements require a Construction Permit. "Ordinary Maintenance" under the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (NJAC 5: 23) does not require a Permit. For single family dwellings, some examples include:

- replacement of windows and doors within original dimensions
- repair and replacement of interior trim and moldings
- replacement flooring materials
- replacement of exterior rain water gutters and leaders
- repair or replacement of 25% or less of roof covering or siding
- repair of plumbing leaks or stoppages
- replacements of faucets or their parts
- replacements of existing electrical receptacles, switches and light fixtures rated at 20 amps or less and less than 150 volts (with no change in wiring or location). Note that replacement of a GFCI (shock proof) outlet is not an ordinary repair and does require a Permit and inspection.

These are examples only; please consult NJ UCC 5:23-2.7 which is available at Town Hall for more information.

In applying for a **Construction Permit**, you are describing the scope and manner of the work project. Complex or large projects will require the completion of applications as well as detailed plans and construction documents. Simple projects such as new electrical service, furnace, boiler, or re-roofing require only the completion of the application itself. A Permit application also officially designates the names of the various contractors who will be working on your job in the Township records. Most residents understand that plumbers and electricians who work on your building must be licensed by the State. As of January 1, 2006, **all** home improvement contractors, not just plumbers and electricians, must register with the State. Information regarding the registration of these contractors is at www.NJConsumerAffairs.com.

For many projects, the **prior** approval of other Township departments is required in order to obtain a Construction Permit. The days when the Building Inspector reviewed and approved all aspects of a project are long gone. Harding departments or agencies involved in prior approvals include:

Health Department – is primarily concerned with project impact on our water wells, aquifers and septic systems. An application to the Health Department is available by calling 973 267 8000 ext.125. Upon review of the proposed project, a determination will be made as to what actions, if any, are required.

Zoning Approvals –Harding Zoning Ordinances prescribe location and density of buildings on your property. These include lot sizes, building setbacks, and building and lot coverages. Projects involving single family dwellings which are compliant with our Zoning Ordinance may be approved by the Township Zoning Officer, Russ Heiney, phone: 973 267 8000 ext.133. If a Zoning variance, site plan review or any subdivision is required, the Zoning Approval would include the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Planning Board.

Engineering Department – considers site grading, run-off, storm water management (dry wells) and soil erosion. Engineering requirements are determined by the size of a proposed project. Contact Janet Doherty, 973 267 8000, ext. 119 for Grading Plan instructions and an application. More technical questions will be referred to the Township Engineer, Paul Fox.

Tree Conservation Officer- For **developed** properties, a Tree Removal Permit is required for the removal of trees 8” or more in diameter, which are located in a “Tree Conservation Area” around the perimeter of the property. For **undeveloped** lots, a Tree Removal Permit is required for removing most trees. Contact the Township Clerk, Linda Peralta, 973 267 8000, ext 118 for applications and additional information.

Historic Preservation Commission – if your property is designated as historic or is in an Historic District, a referral for comment will be made to the HPC on a Construction Permit Application or an Application to the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Planning Board. The HPC encourages applicants to schedule a meeting for a preliminary consultation prior to finalizing your building plans.

Additionally, the New Jersey UCC specifies interim inspections at certain points during construction as well as final inspections of the work. The issuance of a Certificate of Approval or a Certificate of Occupancy represents the completion of the inspection and approval process. New Jersey’s Consumer Protection Laws provide that a contractor should not require final payment for a job until the appropriate certificate has been issued.

Helpful Hints –

- Departmental offices are located in the Harding Town Hall, 21 Blue Mill Road, phone 973 267 8000.
- Job sites must be marked with Block and Lot signs until final inspections are completed.
- Recognize that all work must comply with NJ UCC even if a Building Permit is not required.
- Assure that your contractor(s) are properly registered with the State of New Jersey and that all skilled-trades persons are licensed as required.
- Allow enough time for all pre-permit departmental applications, reviews and approvals.
- Plans will be reviewed and work will be inspected for building, electrical, and plumbing work and fire and carbon monoxide protection and compliance.
- Recognize that fire and carbon monoxide safety protection compliance is required on all projects.
- As of April 2006, the Permit fee for the Building Subcode is based on the proposed volume of the structure when a new building or addition is planned. For alterations, the Building Subcode fee is based on the cost of the work. For the Electrical, Plumbing and Fire Protection Subcodes, the fees are based on the numbers of fixtures, electrical devices and mechanical equipment.

The Construction Department has additional information packages on the following topics:
Building Permit Procedures; Grading Permit Applications; Electric generators; Finished basements; Pools; and Decks.

Call the department 973 267 8000, ext 119 for Permit applications or information packages.