

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BUILDING PERMITS AND ZONING REGULATIONS

If you are unsure whether or not your project requires a permit, please call us at 815-459-4833. We are here to help you avoid costly and time-delaying mistakes.

For what building activities or structures do I require a permit?

New construction, accessory structures to a primary residence including sheds, pools, and solar power equipment. Remodels, HVAC, electric, plumbing, any earth disturbance or excavating and grading. For a partial list, see the document entitled [Projects Requiring Permits](#) on the Village website.

Are there construction or building activities that do not require a permit?

Basic maintenance and upkeep do not require a permit. Nor do necessary non-structural repairs, or non-structural yard improvements, normal landscaping and gardens.

Are there landscaping projects (new or as restoration) that require a permit?

Landscaping that requires excavating and/or grading or installation of berms, ponds, retaining walls, retention ponds, and similar large projects will require a permit from the Village and possibly from the County Storm Water Division. Any project in a wetland or near a body of water may require a permit.

What about reconstruction work after storm or fire damage for instance?

Reconstruction of a damaged structure will require a permit. If the damaged structure was non-conforming prior to the damaging event, there are other requirements that must be considered. Please call us for more information in those circumstances.

Whose responsibility is it to obtain a permit where required?

The property owner must be the applicant on any building permit. In many cases the contractor will take care of the permitting process, with the owner's signature. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the owner to obtain the necessary permits.

If I am a tenant acting with the approval of the landowner – who is ultimately responsible for building permit compliance?

It is ultimately the landowner's responsibility to assure a project is in compliance with zoning and building requirements, however, both the owner and the tenant can be cited for noncompliance depending on the situation.

Where can I find relevant building codes applicable to the work we wish to undertake?

The list is included in Chapter 14 of the Village Municipal Code, which is available on the Village web site and from Village Hall.

What happens if we undertake work without the necessary permits?

Unpermitted work, whether currently in progress or completed some time ago, still requires a permit. The fee will be doubled in those circumstances. If you do not initiate this permit yourself, or fail to comply with this process for an unpermitted project that is brought to our attention by someone else, ordinance violation tickets may be issued until the situation is in compliance. Each day of non-compliance can be considered a separate offense.

Are permits only valid for a specific duration of time?

The duration of a permit for a new house, garage, or new commercial building is 365 days. A remodel or addition is 180 days. All other permits are 60 days. Extensions may be available under certain circumstances. Please call us at 815-459-4833.

What if the work is delayed or temporarily halted after obtaining a permit?

If the work will not be completed in the time allotted for the permit, you need to call the Village for an extension at least two weeks prior to the expiration date, or as soon as possible after that.

What is the role of professionals like architects, engineers or contractors?

For a major project, it may be in your best interest to engage the services of a contractor, engineer or architect depending on the scope of the project. These professionals can assure that your project complies with Village ordinances and industry standards.

Where can we obtain information about the building codes, the zoning ordinances and the comprehensive plan?

The zoning ordinances, and the comprehensive plan are available on the Village of Bull Valley's website as well as at the Village Hall. The building codes are listed in Chapter 14 of the Municipal Code. These codes are administered by an independent Building Inspector under contract with the Village.

How is non-compliance enforced?

When an issue of non-compliance is brought to the attention of the Village, a warning notice of violation or notice of non-compliance may be issued. Sometimes the notice will include a date by which the non-compliance must be corrected. If the recipient of the notice does not correct the violation or contact the Village within seven days, the Village police department may issue ordinance citations, gradually increasing in amount, until the violation is remedied. Ordinance citations may require a court appearance before the Village Code Hearing Officer. If the Hearing Officer finds the citations valid and citations remain unpaid, the Village may seek a judgment in circuit court, or may send the debts to collections.

What are the penalties for non-compliance?

The penalties for non-compliance range from \$75-\$750, per day, depending on the situation and duration of the situation. Each day a violation continues may be considered a separate violation.

Who enforces compliance and/or issues a warning or fine?

The Village Code Enforcement Officer is responsible for issuing warnings and the Village Police Department may issue ordinance violations.

How do I raise a concern or lodge a complaint about the perceived non-compliance by another party?

If you would like to raise a concern or lodge a complaint, please contact Village staff either via phone, mail, email, or in-person at 1904 S Cherry Valley Rd.

Can I lodge a complaint anonymously?

Yes, complaints can be made anonymously unless the complainant wishes to sign a statement and appear to testify if necessary. If the Village determines that the complaint is valid and in violation of the Zoning Code or Municipal Code, the Village will issue a citation and begin the enforcement process. At this point, the Village becomes the complainant, not the individual(s) who brought it to the Village's attention.

How do I know what use rights are attached to our property's zoning?

Approved Uses for your zoning category are listed in Section 5 of the Bull Valley Zoning Code, posted on this web site and available by calling Village Hall. A use not included in the zoning category of your property is excluded.