

Inspection/Zoning FAQ

Common questions and answers for permitting and zoning questions that apply to parcels of land located within city limits of Rhinelander.

Why are Permits Required?

A permit allows the City's building inspector to inspect a project for compliance with State building, electrical, plumbing and HVAC codes for the homeowner's protection and safety. BEFORE you allow a contractor, private party to begin work, a permit MUST be obtained prior to work commencing. It is the responsibility of the owner to make sure that either the contractor or the owner has obtained the proper permits. Contractors include electricians, plumbers, HVAC, and framers.

(Per Municipal codes 5.01 through and including 5.07; Title 5 – Land Development)

Why do I need inspections if my contractor is licensed by the State?

Inspections help ensure that the work has been completed in conformance with the safety and building codes, and the work or installation meets the minimum requirements of the Uniform Dwelling Code. It doesn't hurt to have a second pair of eyes inspect the work to help protect you, your family, and your property investment.

What projects require permits?

- New home construction
- New window or door installation
- Building additions
- Building Alterations/remodeling (including finishing basements)
- Razing a structure (includes removal of garages, sheds & main structures)
- Demolition (this includes gut or removal of part of a building (interior/exterior))
- Excavation
- Repairs, including fire and water damage
- New driveway or parking area (including expansion or replacement)
- Sheds or accessory buildings, including garages, carports, etc. (no matter the size)
- New and replacement of decks, steps, stoops, etc.
- New or replacement of all heating and cooling projects, including gas or wooden inserts and ductwork.
- Plumbing work, this includes interior and exterior plumbing (hot water heater, toilet/sink replacement)
- Fence (this includes install and repair that involves replacement)
- Signs including new; refacing and/or replacing (includes window decals that advertise your business or services)
- Chickens and chicken coops
- Right-Of-Ways (ROW) – this includes digging, boring, trenching and any other use or need of the ROW
- Moving Buildings

What does not require a permit?

- Painting
- Insulation in existing structure
- Flooring that does not change subfloor
- Faucet replacement
- Small repairs with a value less than \$500 (includes material & cost)

Can't I do my own electric or plumbing work without a contractor?

You may do your own plumbing and electrical (except service upgrades/installations which must be done by a master electrician) as long as you OWN and RESIDE in the property.

If you own a rental house, but you do not reside in the property, per the State Uniform Dwelling Code, the work must be performed by a licensed company or individual. Permits are still required even if the owner is completing the work, as well as any necessary inspections.

How Can I Obtain a Permit?

Permits can be applied online through the Inspection Department page on rhinelandercityhall.org.

You may also come into the Inspection office, we are located within the Rhinelander City Hall at 135 S Stevens Street, Rhinelander. Office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00am until 4:30pm. Please be aware that with inspections, actual staff hours in office may vary.

How much does a permit cost?

Building Permit fees vary based on the complexity of the project. To get an idea of your fee cost, see the [Rhinelander Fee Schedule](#) which can be found in the links on the main page. Your fee, however, will be determined by the Inspection Department. Please note that construction will not be allowed to commence until payment is received and the permit obtained.

How can I pay for my permit?

Once your permit is approved and you have been notified of your fee, payment can be made online through the Payment Service Network link sent to the applicant's email. You may also pay with cash or check in the Clerk's Office. Checks can be made out to City of Rhinelander; be sure to include the site address in the memo. The Clerk's Office is in Rhinelander City Hall at 135 S Stevens Street, Rhinelander, WI 54501. Please note that construction will not be allowed to commence until payment is received and the permit obtained.

Will the city locate my property lines?

The City of Rhinelander does not assist private property owners in locating property lines, surveying private property, or locating property lines between properties. You will need to contact a Licensed Land Surveyor.

Where can I find information about setbacks and allowed uses?

Zoning information can be found in our ordinance under Chapter 5.07 here:

https://library.municode.com/wi/rhinelander/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT5LADE_CH5.07ZO

I don't know what my property is zoned, how can I find that out?

Send the inspection Department an email to ojopek@rhinelanderwi.us and we will be happy to send you that. Information on zoning and allowed uses can be found at:

https://library.municode.com/wi/rhinelander/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT5LADE_CH5.07ZO