

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT - TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PERMITTING

City of Houston HoustonPermittingCenter.org revised: Oct. 15, 2019 832.394.9494 Form CE-11651.

1. Permits. Although certain work is exempt from permits; exemptions from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction. Any alteration, repair, remodel, renovation, or new construction in both residential and commercial buildings requires permits unless specifically exempted by the applicable code. Any work done to repair, replace, alter or install mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment also requires a permit, but if no plans are involved these single trade permits may be obtained online.

2. Permit Exemptions. Some examples of the items exempt from a permit are :

a. Painting, carpet, tile and wood flooring **b.** Interior trim and similar finish work **c.** Typical wood or cyclone fences up to 8 feet tall that is not electrically energized. (Sheet metal fences or fences over 8 ft. tall need a permit.) **d.** Residential accessory structures such as storage sheds less than 200 square feet **e.** Uncovered decks up to 30 inches above the ground

3. Deed Restrictions. The City of Houston Legal Department enforces certain deed restriction items. Confirm whether your property has deed restrictions before you build in order to ensure that your project will conform. You may contact the Harris County Deed Records at 713-755-6405. **OR Contact the Westwood Civic Club Architectural Review and Deed Restriction Committee at k-calvert@sbcglobal.net.** Remember, the deed restrictions are published on the Westwood Civic Club website. City of Houston permits require that the permit taker must state under oath that the plans being submitted do not violate the deed restrictions. Failure to do so and misstate on the permit application that you got approval when you did not can result in work stoppage orders (red tag), fines and even being made to undo all work up to that point at your own expense.

4. Licensed Trades. Permits for the structural portion of the work can be purchased by anyone; however, in general, mechanical, electrical and plumbing work must be permitted and performed by a licensed person.

5. Certificate of Occupancy (for businesses, not residences). All commercial buildings require a Certificate of Occupancy to show conformance with the local building codes. The Certificate of Occupancy can either be issued after the completion of new construction or on an existing building, following inspection by the Occupancy Inspection team.

6. Exits. Many code items could save your life. Eg - Bedroom windows must be the correct size to ensure that in the event of a fire, you can get out and the Fire Fighters can get in. Be sure to understand all the code requirements beforehand.

7. Inspections. All requests for construction inspections are completed the next business day following the request.

8. Energy Code. The State of Texas has an Energy Code which places restrictions on the building components to reduce the overall energy consumption of the building. Items affected by this code are windows, wall ceiling insulation, air-conditioning equipment and ducts. If you plan on remodeling or repairing, ensure that your project conforms to this code.

9. Trees and Other Landscaping. Trees are protected by the City of Houston. Trees within the building setback line may not be cut down or destroyed. Required landscaping that has been provided in parking lots and on new building sites are required to be maintained for a year by City Ordinance.

10. Architects and Engineers. The State Board of Architectural Examiners and the State Board of Professional Engineers require that some buildings and structures be designed by a registered design professional, but not every project does. To confirm whether a registered design professional is required for a specific project, please contact <http://www.tbae.state.tx.us> or <http://www.tbpe.state.tx.us> 5

City of Houston: Non-permitted construction activity can result in the issuance of citations, so if you are not sure if a permit is required, or what code is to be followed, please call us. We are here to help. You can contact the Customer Assistance Office at 832-394-9494.

Westwood Civic Club follows all construction in the neighborhood, new or remodeling; and will not hesitate to file a 3-1-1 report to have the city inspectors check on work being done. Remember that all permits taken out are published on the city website so it is easy to see if you have done your part or not. We want everyone to be able to enjoy their property so contact us in advance with questions at: k-calvert@sbcglobal.net

PERMITS AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW In Westwood Civic Club's ongoing effort to maintain its Deed Restrictions, we would like to remind residents and property owners that just getting a permit from the City of Houston does not mean that the building or alteration complies with Deed Restrictions. In fact, in order to get a permit, someone has to sign an affidavit that states that the issuance of a permit does not authorize construction on, or use of, any property in violation of deed restrictions. Any misrepresentations on the affidavit will render the permit void.

New construction or renovations/alterations can receive approval by the Deed Restriction and Architectural Review Committee of the Westwood Civic Club for conformance to the Deed Restrictions. The steps recommended are that the resident, property owner or builder submit their plans to the review committee first and get the written approval necessary to truthfully sign the affidavit when applying for a permit.

Together with other professional board members, Westwood Civic Club offers its residents and property owners a worthwhile and necessary service for which some of our neighboring civic organizations charge up to \$500. The Westwood Deed Restriction and Architectural Review Committee can be reached through E-mail at k-calvert@sbcglobal.net

Deed Restriction for all four sections of Westwood are published on our website: www.westwoodcivicclub.com

