



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Basic Home Repairs

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BEFORE PURSUING THE BUILDING PERMIT

Before beginning any work, answering the questions below will help with the permitting process.

There are many simple home repairs that do not require a permit. Below is a list of the most common home repairs that DO NOT need a building permit.

- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, counter tops and similar finish work including the repair of damaged gypsum board that is not part of a fire-rated assembly
- Wood floors installation
- Interior trim and similar finish work
- Fences less than 8 feet tall
- Uncovered detached decks less than 30 inches in height
- Repair of exterior wood facial, trim, and soffits
- Siding that does not exceed 128 square feet and is not part of a fire-rated assembly
- Roof covering that does not exceed 100 square feet
- Kitchen cabinets are not required to be permitted. **However**, if plumbing and electrical work is involved the kitchen cabinet work will require a permit.

Your project WILL NOT be considered a basic home repair if you are doing any of the following:

- Changing the footprint of the house
- Creating openings in walls
- Adding or removing walls
- Changing the façade
- Changing the size of or relocating doors or windows
- Changing the pitch of the roof
- Replacing the roof
- Reframing the home
- Replacing a large portion or all of the stucco or EIFS wall covering
- Replacing the porch
- Installing a different fireplace



HELPFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Flood maps: www.gims.houstontx.gov

Harris County Appraisal District:
www.hcad.org

Montgomery Central Appraisal
District: www.mcad-tx.org

Fort Bend Central Appraisal District:
www.fbcad.org

Harris County Flood Control District
(HCFCD)
9900 Northwest Freeway
Houston, TX 77092
713-684-4000

Harris County Flood Control District
Watershed Coordinator
713-956-3074

Harris County Flood Control District
Property Management
713-684-4000

Center Point Energy Land & Right-of-
Way Department (TRT-11)
PO Box 1700
Houston, TX 77251-1700
Attention: Julie Bray 713-207-1557
Linsey Williams 713-207-6211

Southwestern Bell Telephone
Company (SBC) Right-of-Way
7602 Spring Cypress, Room #226
Spring, TX 77379
Jerry Ray 281-379-7524 or Amanda
Burus 281-379-7518

Is a contractor doing the work?

There are many ways to ensure that you are working with a good contractor. The City of Houston does not license building contractors, but there are several voluntary trade organizations where you can find lists of them. You can also check the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) for business reviews, alerts and tips. Be sure to always check references and ensure that your contractor is properly insured.

Are you aware of any Homeowners Association (HOA) restrictions?

HOAs sometimes place restrictions on the types of construction that can occur, so be sure to check with your HOA before beginning any construction projects.

Is your property in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone?

Prior to starting your project, visit www.gims.houstontx.gov to determine if your property is located in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone. If you have flood insurance you can also contact your insurance provider for this information as well.

What is the total cost of your project?

The estimated project cost will be needed in order to complete the building permit application. (See page 5 for more information)

DEFINITIONS

BASE FLOOD ELEVATION (BFE)	The expected height of flooding during the base flood or “100-year event” (a rain-storm that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year).
BUILDING ELEVATION	Two-dimensional view of each side of the building.
CONVEYANCE ZONE	The portion of the Special Flood Hazard Area that is utilized to convey water during the occurrence of the base flood. Areas in a floodplain where natural ground is 18 inches below base flood elevation or are within 100 feet of the floodway are defined as conveyance zones.
FLOODPLAIN	Land area around a stream, river or bayou that would be affected by flooding during a “100-year event” (a rainstorm that has a 1% chance of occurring in a given year), because the water is no longer contained within the banks of the stream, river or bayou during or after that event. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS (Geographic Information & Management System) website www.gims.houstontx.gov . The floodplain is also known as “A” zones on flood insurance maps produced by FEMA. “A” zones include Zone A, Zone AE and Zone AO.
FLOODWAY	The area for storm runoff along a bayou, river, or other watercourse. In the City of Houston, this area has been mapped throughout the City and can be found on the GIMS website (www.gims.houstontx.gov).
HOMEOWNER’S ASSOCIATION	An organization created by a group of property owners, or property developers which helps to oversee any shared property belonging to the homeowner group, and which usually has a legal means of enforcing agreed upon rules the homeowners must follow.
PROJECT COST	This includes the total cost of construction to the end user, excluding the land purchase costs and the overhead attributed to the land purchase. It also includes the value of donated goods and services.
PROPERTY LINE	A line dividing one lot from another, or from a street or any public place.
SUBSTANTIAL IMPORVEMENT	City of Houston Ordinance Chapter 19-2 states that a “substantial improvement” means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the current market value of the structure (before the start of the construction of the improvement).

KEY CONTACTS

Houston Permitting Center

Hours of Operation:
 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
 1002 Washington Ave.
 Houston, TX 77002
 Phone: 832-394-9000
 Email: houston.permittingcenter@houston.tx.gov

Building Code Enforcement Permits

Hours of Operation:
 8:00am – 5:00pm
 Contact Information:
 Phone: 832-394-9494
 Email: rmcacd@houston.tx.gov

Floodplain Management Office

Hours of Operation:
 8:00am – 4:30pm
 Contact Information:
 Phone: 832-394-8854
 Email:

Inspections

General Number.....	713-222-9922
Flood.....	832-394-8854
Structural	832-394-8840
Electrical	832-394-8860
Mechanical	832-394-8850
Plumbing	832-394-8870

WHAT SPECIAL CONDITIONS EXIST?

The following items represent the special conditions that must be considered as you prepare your plans:

Building Code Enforcement

- If the repairs are being made due to Fire, Vehicle, Tree or Weather damage to your home, your home must first be inspected by a City of Houston Structural Inspector before the building permit can be issued. Schedule an inspection by calling 713-222-9922.
- For general repair projects over \$5,000, any ceiling replacement in a bedroom will require the installation of hardwired smoke detectors to bring the bedroom up to current code. A licensed electrician must install these hardwired smoke detectors and they must have a battery backup.
- Windows and Insulation must meet the ‘R-values’ required by code. Also, you must show the inspector the manufacturer’s specification sheet for the insulation that indicates the smoke development and flame spread index numbers.
- For fireplace replacements, the inspector may request to see the manufacturer’s installation specifications.

Floodplain Management Office (FMO)

If the project is in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone, Floodplain Plan Review is only required if the project cost is greater than \$10,000.

- If the project is in the 100-year floodplain or floodway and represents a ‘substantial improvement’ to the property, then the entire building must be brought into compliance with the elevation requirement as explained below.
 - For properties in 100-year floodplain, the minimum flood protection elevation for the lowest floor and utilities of a building is 12” above Base Flood Elevation.
 - For properties in the floodway, the minimum flood protection elevation for the lowest horizontal member and utilities is 18” above Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Completely open foundations are required in the floodway. (An example of an open foundation is a pier and beam foundation.)

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR BUILDING PERMIT APPROVAL **Building Permit Application Form**

This form should be completed prior to arriving at the Houston Permitting Center (HPC).

 Residential Repair Spec List (Form 1059)

This form is to be completed when doing basic repairs to the home provided the materials match or are equivalent to the materials being repaired or replaced.

Note: *If replacing smoke detectors, indicate the number of smoke detectors to be replaced or installed on form 1059*

 Project Cost (see Definitions on page 3):

For a building permit, the required cost estimate is a market valuation that includes the profit and overhead.

NOTE: *If the project cost appears to be unreasonably low, a signed contract between the owner and contractor may be required.*

 Floodplain Plan Review Requirements

You must provide the following if your property resides in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone AND the project cost is over \$10,000:

- A cost estimate must be provided in one of the following ways:
 - A signed, sealed, and dated cost estimate provided by a professional engineer or architect, each licensed by the state of Texas
 - A cost estimate prepared, signed and dated by an insurance adjustor, licensed by the state of Texas, may be provided to document the cost of repairing a damaged structure.
 - A notarized contract of work signed and dated by the property owner and a contractor
 - An owner-certified cost estimate with an owner-notarized signature may be submitted when the property owner proposes to construct the improvements or repairs. In such cases, the cost estimate must itemize the cost of materials and a reasonable estimate of the market value of labor for work performed by the owner. The Floodplain Management Office has developed a form ([Project Cost Estimation Worksheet](#)) that can be used for owner self-certification of cost.
- Documentation of the market value of the existing structure must be provided in one of the following ways:
 - The most recent property appraisal from Harris County Appraisal District (www.hcad.org) OR Montgomery Central Appraisal District (www.mcad-tx.org) OR Fort Bend Central Appraisal District (www.fbcad.org)
 - An appraisal performed by a certified real estate appraiser licensed by the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board (TALCB) that documents the market value of the structure prior to the proposed project or represents a depreciated replacement cost

If the project is a 'substantial improvement' (refer to Definitions page 3) the FMO requires all documentation below:

- Either provide an elevation certificate based on finished construction documenting that the existing building's finished floor meets the elevation requirements (refer to special conditions) or provide an elevation certificate based on construction drawings and prepared by a licensed surveyor or engineer that shows that the building will be modified to meet the elevation requirements.
- If the project includes a crawl space, adequate flood openings and drainage in the crawl space must be shown on the plans
- Calculations for flood openings must be provided with plans
- *For projects within the floodway*, pier and beam construction is required
- *For projects within the floodway*, a "no adverse impact" letter and supporting documentation prepared by a professional engineer is required

START

1.0 Complete Building Permit Application

2.0 Complete Residential Repair Spec List (Form 1059)

3.0 Go to the kiosk and pull a ticket to obtain a project number

4.0 Proceed to HPC Representative to get your project number

Are you in a Floodplain?

Project cost over \$10,000?

5.0 Proceed to the Floodplain Management Section for plan review

6.0 Proceed to the One-Stop Section for plan review

7.0 Go to Cashier and purchase the building permit

END

CUSTOMER TIP:
A kiosk ticket is required to access the various services at the HPC. Have the CSR 'transfer' your current ticket to the next service in the Plan Review process instead of pulling a new ticket from the kiosk.

STEPS TO FOLLOW AT THE HPC FOR THE BUILDING PERMIT

- 1.0 Complete the Building Permit Application prior to arriving at the HPC.
- 2.0 Prior to coming to the HPC, download and complete the Residential Repair Spec List (Form 1059)
- 3.0 Once at the HPC you must obtain a ticket for a project number from the kiosk station located on the first floor and wait for your number to be called.
- 4.0 HPC Customer Service Representatives (CSR) will call you on a first-come, first-serve basis. Your first step will be to obtain a project number.
- 5.0 The Floodplain Management Office is responsible for permitting all construction activity within the City of Houston's Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone). You only need to visit the Floodplain Management Office if your project is located in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone AND if the estimated project cost is greater than \$10,000. If this is not the case, please proceed to Step 6.
- 6.0 The One-Stop Plan Review section ensures plans submitted are in compliance with the current construction codes. This section will issue the building permit (which authorizes you to begin construction) after your plans have been approved by all required departments/sections. A sales order will be provided to take to the cashier to purchase the building permit.
- 7.0 All monetary transactions are handled by the cashier on the 1st floor. The cashier will be able to provide your building permit once all fees have been paid.

SECTION	KIOSK PATH
Building Permits	Permits -> Building Construction -> Project Number / Single Trade
Floodplain Management Office	Plan Review -> Flood Management Plan Review -> Flood Management
One-Stop Plan Review	Plan Review -> Building Plan Review -> One Stop Plan Review

Customer Tip:

All required inspections can be scheduled online at www.pdinet.pd.houstontx.gov/cohilms/webs/Inspection_Lookup.asp or by contacting the Building Inspection Line at 713-222-9922.

The owner can only schedule building permit inspections. All other inspections must be scheduled by a licensed contractor.

WHAT INSPECTIONS SHOULD BE EXPECTED?

All required inspections are listed on the building permit job card. The following are some typical inspections that are performed for most basic home repair projects. These inspections may change depending on each project's scope of work.

Structural Inspections

- Building Final - Call after the entire project has been completed

Flood Inspections (Only when project is in the 100-year floodplain, floodway or conveyance zone AND project cost is over \$10,000)

- Pre-Construction
- Final Sitework (upon completion of all work outside of the building)

LINKS TO APPLICATIONS, FORMS AND SAMPLE DRAWINGS

The below documents can be accessed by clicking the hyperlinks or by visiting www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/code-enforcement/publications.html

Applications and Forms

1. [Building Permit Application](#)
2. [Residential Repair Spec List \(Form 1059\)](#)
3. [Project Cost Estimation Worksheet \(Flood Requirement Only\)](#)

Sample Drawings and Other Useful Information

1. [Conveyance Zone FAQ](#)
2. [GIMS - How to Check Floodplain Status](#)