

## Northampton County Building Inspections Department

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q:** Do I need a permit for my storage building?

**A:** The North Carolina Residential Building Code reads as follows:

**R101.2.1 Accessory buildings.** *Accessory buildings with any dimension greater than 12 feet (3658 mm) shall meet the provisions of this code.*

This means that if your storage building is greater than 12 feet in any dimension, it will require a permit and must be built in compliance with the North Carolina Residential Building Code.

**Q:** Do I need a permit for a deck?

**A:** The North Carolina Residential Building Code reads as follows:

**R101.2.2 Accessory structures.** *The following accessory structures shall meet the provisions of this code.*

1. *Decks, see Appendix M,*
2. *Gazebos,*
3. *Retaining walls, see Section R404.4,*
4. *Detached masonry chimneys located less than 10 feet (3048 mm) from other buildings or lot lines,*
5. *Swimming pools and spas, see Appendix V,*
6. *Detached carports,*
7. *Docks, piers, bulkheads, and waterway structures, see Section R327.*

**Exception:** *Portable, lightweight carports not exceeding 400 square feet (37 m<sup>2</sup>) or 12 feet (3658 mm) mean roof height.*

This means “yes”, you do need permits for all decks and porches and they will be required to be in compliance with the North Carolina Residential Building Code. Most of the information for building decks and small porches can be found in Appendix M of the NCRBC. We will be happy to provide a copy as well.

**Q:** What wind zone is Northampton County located in:

**A:** 115 mph

**Q:** Am I required to have an engineer or architect draw the plans for my home?

**A:** No. A homeowner can draw their own plans or they may hire a draftsman to draw their plans.

**Q:** How many sets of plans do I need to submit for review.

**A:** Two (2) sets. You will get one back after review. A set of approved plans must be kept onsite.

**Q:** What is the minimum footing depth?

**A:** The NCRBC requires that footing depths (the bottom of the hole or trench) extend no less than 12" below finished grade.

**Q:** Can I build my own house?

**A:** Yes, but you will not be exempt from the requirements of the NCRBC.

**Q:** I own rental property. Can I do electrical work on the rental house?

**A:** No. You can only do work on your place of residence. You will need to hire a licensed electrician to do electrical work on your rental property.

**Q:** Does Northampton County have its own building code?

**A:** No. The Northampton County building inspectors enforce the building codes adopted by the State of North Carolina.

**Q:** I own 1 ½ acres and I have a big garden. Can I build a shelter for my garden tractor and qualify under the farm exemption that would allow me to construct my shelter without permits?

**A:** No. You must qualify as a Bona Fide Farm in order to qualify for the exemption.

**Q:** I am a farmer and I need to construct new dryer shelters for my peanut dryers. I am going to put the shelters on my 1,200 acre farm that qualifies as a bona fide farm. I know I am exempt from the zoning and building permits but what about the other permits? Am I exempt from those?

**A:** No. You are only exempt from the zoning and building permits. You will need to get permits for the other trades as necessary. (electrical, HVAC, etc)

**Q:** Do I need a permit for a fence?

**A:** A building permit is not needed for a fence but a zoning permit is required.

**Q:** Do I have to post my E-911 address?

**A:** Yes. In order to receive a Certificate of Occupancy your E-911 address must be posted. However, we ask that you post it when you start your project because it makes it easier for us to find the correct jobsite.

**Q:** I am building a deck. Can I just dig some holes, put post in the holes and pour concrete around them?

**A:** No. Appendix M of the North Carolina Residential Building Code requires that support posts for a deck be supported by a proper footing.

**AM102.1 Footings.** Support posts shall be supported by a minimum footing in accordance with Figure AM102.1(1) and Table AM102.1. Minimum footing depth shall be 12 inches (305 mm) below finished grade in accordance with Section R403.1.4. Tributary area is calculated as shown in Figure AM102.1(2).

**Q:** Do I need demolition permit to tear down a building?

**A:** Yes. § 153A-357 states that no person may commence or proceed with any of the following without first securing from the inspection department with jurisdiction over the site of the work each permit required by the State Building Code and any other State or local law or local ordinance or regulation applicable to the work:

- (1) The construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement to another site, removal, or demolition of any building.

There are some exceptions. Please familiarize yourself with NCGS 153A-357 regarding the permits required for your project.

**Q:** What paperwork do I need for a zoning permit?

**A:** You will need a completed zoning permit application, a site plan drawn to scale and a copy of your recorded survey if your property is less than two (2) acres in size. We usually ask that you bring a copy of your deed as well to prove ownership. If you don't own the land on which you are trying to make improvements, we will ask that you bring notarized permission from the property owner clearly stating that you have their permission to carry out the requested activity on their specific piece of property.

**Q:** How long is the zoning permit good for?

**A:** A typical zoning permit is good for six (6) months unless you purchase a building permit for your project along with it. When a building permit is involved, the life of the zoning permit will run with the life of the building permit up to a period of three (3) years. However, if for some reason the building permit is no longer valid during that three year period, the zoning permit also is no longer valid.

**Q:** What improvements to my property require a zoning permit?

**A:** Any time you wish to add a building / residence to your property or increase the footprint of your existing structure, you will need a zoning permit. You will also need a zoning permit if you change the use of the property or structure on the property. For example, you have an old store that you want to convert to a place of residence. This will require, at a bare minimum, a zoning permit and appropriate building permits.

**[IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOT ANSWERED HERE, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT \(252\) 534-5171 FOR CLARIFICATION.](#)**