

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What building codes are the Warren County Building & Environmental Codes office enforcing?**

- The International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, 2012 edition with the following amendments:
  - Remove Chapter 11 (International Energy Conservation Code) and adopt 2009 edition of same;
  - Remove the words “or fuel fired appliances” in Section R501.3(2);
  - Remove the words “for piping systems other than plastic” in Section P2503.7;
  - Remove the words “equipped with a self-closing device” in Section R302.5.1;
  - Remove Chapters 34-43;
  - Remove Section R313.2.
- The International Energy Conservation Code, 2009 edition
- The International Building Code, 2012 edition
- The International Mechanical Code, 2012 edition
- The International Plumbing Code, 2012 edition
- The International Fuel Gas Code, 2012 edition
- The International Fire Code, 2012 edition

### **Where can I obtain a copy of the adopted codes?**

- The code books can be purchased through the International Code Council or other retail bookstores. You may also find them online at <http://publicecodes.cyberregs.com/icod/>

### **Do the adopted codes apply to new residential construction?**

- Yes. Blueprints or working drawings, including square footage, are required in order to obtain a building permit.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to new commercial construction, including cell towers?**

- Yes. Blueprints or working drawings, including square footage, are required in order to obtain a building permit.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to additions and/or renovations?**

- Yes. Construction of additions to existing structures with a minimum area of thirty (30) square feet, and any remodeling project which changes the structural integrity of an existing building or if financial assistance for the project is obtained from a bank or lending institution. Construction of a deck qualifies as an addition; therefore a building permit is required for construction of a deck having a minimum area of thirty (30) square feet or a cost exceeding \$1,000.00 including labor and materials.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to decks?**

- Yes. A building permit is required for decks greater than thirty (30) square feet. No permit fees are required regardless of size or cost of deck.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to pools?**

- Yes. A building permit is required for installation of above-ground or in-ground pools. No permit fees are required regardless of cost of pool.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to storm shelters?**

- Yes. A building permit is required for installation of in-ground storm shelters. A flat rate permit fee of \$50 will be applicable to all in-ground storm shelters regardless of cost of structure.

### **Do the adopted codes apply to agricultural structures?**

- No. Building permits will not be required for agricultural-related structures.

### **Do I need a residential building permit to place a manufactured home or modular home?**

- No. Manufactured and modular homes are inspected at the factory. Manufactured homes must be installed by licensed installers and must have an installation decal applied after completion of the set-up. If a manufactured home owner chooses to have an inspection of the installation, he or she should call (615) 741-7192.

### **Do I need a permit for a manufactured home or modular home?**

- Only if a custom addition, site built deck, porch or stoop is built next to the home.

### **Do I need other permits if I have a county residential building permit?**

- The county building permit is a building permit only. It is not:
  - Planning approval
  - Grading or fill approval
  - Determination of flood plain compliance
  - A septic or sewer permit; or
  - An electrical permit.
- The permit does not authorize any violation of any state law or regulation or any local ordinance. A permit only gives you the right to build if you are in compliance with all other state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

### **Can a homeowner build his/her own house?**

- Yes. Pursuant to TCA § 62-6-103, an owner of property may construct a single residence once every two years for his/her own use, as long as it is not for resale, lease or rent without being a licensed contractor. However, anyone hired by the homeowner whose portion is \$25,000 or more would not be exempt from the contractors' licensing requirements.

### **How do I check to see if my contractor is licensed?**

- You can check it online at [verify.tn.gov](http://verify.tn.gov)

### **How long is my permit valid?**

- Work must be started within 180 days after the permit is issued. A permit expires upon completion of the work and every building permit expires two years from the date of issuance or upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy, whichever occurs first, unless: (1) the inspector determines that substantial progress has been made in the work authorized by the permit; and (2) the Warren County Building & Environmental Department Director, or designee thereof, grants an exception in writing after receiving a written request.

### **Who is responsible for requesting/scheduling an inspection?**

- The permit holder is solely responsible for requesting an inspection. Subcontractors should not schedule an inspection. Homeowners should only schedule an inspection if the homeowner is the permit holder.

### **How long will it take to get an inspection?**

- The law requires all inspections to occur within three working days of when the request is made to the inspector, except for footer inspections which are to be performed within one working day of the request. Additionally, the rules allow any inspection to be waived if an inspection letter approving the work is signed and submitted by an architect or engineer currently registered in the State of Tennessee.

### **How many inspections will be required?**

- Seven inspections will be required: the foundation prior to pour, the framing rough-in, the plumbing rough-in, the mechanical rough-in, and the final plumbing, the final mechanical, and final construction. If your foundation is to be a concrete slab under a living space with separately poured footing, you will need an eighth inspection.

### **When should I request an inspection?**

- Foundation Inspection - After poles, piers, trenches or basement areas are excavated and any required forms erected and any required reinforcing steel is in place and supported prior to the placing of concrete. The foundation inspection includes excavations for thickened slabs intended for the support of bearing walls, partitions, structural supports, equipment and special requirements for wood foundations. If rebar is required in the footing or slab, it should be in place prior to the inspection. Monolith poured slabs are inspected the same as a footing.
- Slab Foundation Other Than a Monolith Pour Inspection - This occurs when a slab is poured that does not have integral footings. An inspection is required in addition to the foundation inspection. The inspection should be requested after excavation, fill material is placed and compacted, and reinforcement and forms are in place. This is not required for garage slabs, only for slabs of living spaces.
- Framing, Plumbing, and Mechanical Rough-In Inspections - After floor, wall and roof framing; fire stopping; draft stopping; bracing; rough-in plumbing; rough-in mechanical and rough-in electrical are in place. If batt or roll wall insulation is used, it must be in place prior to requesting an inspection. If a plastic vapor barrier is used, it should be installed after the inspection. If loose-fill or spray applied insulation is used, the request should be made before it is installed (a manufacturer's product data sheet and installation certificate

stating the product meets or exceeds the energy code will be required).

- Final Inspection - after the permitted work is complete and prior to occupancy.

### **What happens when I call for an inspection and when can I expect to hear from an inspector and get an inspection?**

- When you call 931-474-2633 you will need your permit number. At that time, you can notify the inspector of the inspection request. The inspector will then contact the permit holder and schedule a time for the inspection.

### **Can an inspection be waived?**

- Any inspection may be waived if an inspection letter approving the work is signed and submitted by an Architect or Engineer currently registered with the State of Tennessee.

### **Do I have to pay for a re-inspection?**

- No.

### **If I have a complaint about an inspector, who do I call?**

- You may call the County Executive's office at 931-473-2505.

### **What happens if my contractor or owner permit changes?**

- If, during the construction process, a property owner hires a contractor or there is a change of contractor, a new permit must be obtained. A refund of any inspection fees for inspections not performed on the original permit may be requested from the Department. Refund requests must be made from the Department and not an Issuing Agent.

### **If my permit gets lost or destroyed, what should I do?**

- Contact the Building & Environmental Codes Department to request a new permit card. Only the Department may issue a duplicate building permit.

### **What are the benefits for and costs to citizens in a city or county with a qualifying one and two family residential code?**

- First, consumers will have protection from substandard construction and will benefit from the reduced energy costs in soundly

constructed homes. The U. S. Department of Energy estimates that homes built to a modern code save 30% to 50% in energy usage costs. Appraisals of energy-efficient homes could be higher than one that does not meet energy standards, which could impact mortgage loan to value ratios positively.

- Identifying any mistakes before they have been concealed by further construction will make any correction less costly. Reputable home builders benefit from having standards that apply to all contractors and from enforcement of those standards.
- Homes built to a residential code are safer for you, your family, and guests.
- Homes required to properly dispose of waste will protect the environment.
- New homeowners in cities and counties with codes that are effectively enforced may benefit from an ISO Building Code Effectiveness Grading System premium discount on their homeowner's insurance. Homes that are constructed meeting higher standards may suffer less damage in a storm, for example, and in the long term reduced claims would impact risk-based insurance rates.
- Reduced energy costs more than offset applicable permitting and inspection fees in a very short period of time, which impacts the long-term affordability of a residence.

### **What is the cost of a permit?**

- The permit fee is based on the cost of construction. You can use our fee schedule to estimate your permit fee. This fee covers the cost of all required inspections.

### **My question is not answered above, how should I contact the Department?**

- You may email the department at [wccodes@warrencountytn.gov](mailto:wccodes@warrencountytn.gov) or you may call 931-474-2633.