

**VI. Q. When do I apply for a permit?**

**A.** A permit must be obtained before work begins.

**VII. Q. What if I forget to apply for a permit?**

**A.** The fees on the permit are doubled and your ability to obtain permits may be in jeopardy.

**VIII. Q. What and when are inspections required?**

**A.** A general rule is nothing is to be covered up before it is inspected.

1. All footings are to be inspected prior to being poured. If they are not, be prepared to dig down and expose the footing.
2. All underground work is to be inspected before it is covered over.
3. All electrical, plumbing, mechanical and structural work is to be inspected prior to drywall being installed.
4. Final inspections on all trade and building permits are required before the building, addition or remodel is occupied. Failure to obtain inspections can result in loss of permit privileges and possible court action.

For more information contact the City of Decatur Building Inspections Department 217/424-2787.

Revised: 6/20/12

## **City of Decatur, Illinois Construction Inspection Division**

### **RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**I. Q. Why do we have building codes?**

**A.** Building codes are designed to safeguard health and safety in every building.

**II. Q. Why do I need a permit to do this work?**

**A.** Getting a permit brings you the services of the inspector who may be able to give you advice on how to proceed with the work. Also, work without a permit is illegal and can pose serious complications for you when you try to sell your house.

**III. Q. What code does the City of Decatur enforce on residential construction?**

**A.** The 2006 International Residential Code applies to residential construction as well as the 2004 Illinois State Plumbing Code, the 2011 National Electrical Code, the 2009 International Mechanical Code and Chapter 67, 68, 69, 70 and 70.1 of the Municipal Code. City Code is available on line at: [www.decaturil.gov](http://www.decaturil.gov) Info—Municipal Code.

**IV. Q. When is a building permit required for residential construction?**

**A.** A building permit is required any time any structural member is installed, altered, removed or re-supported. This means **if it supports anything, a permit would be required.**

Examples:

1. Replace or re-support any rafter, truss, floor joists, stud in an outside or bearing wall.
2. Install a window which is larger than the existing opening.
3. Build any new structure or add on to an existing structure (i.e., deck, porch, garage, shed, ramps, etc.)
4. Rebuild any porch, deck if new floor joists are installed or old ones re-supported, new roof columns, repair or replace trusses, rafters and joists.
5. Install a new exterior door or replace an existing door, if it is larger than the existing opening.

A building permit is **not** required for the following:

1. Replace a window, door of the same size or smaller.
2. Replace roofing material or roof sheathing.
3. Replace a porch or deck floor as long as supporting members are not changed or re-supported.
4. Residential storage shed 100 square feet or smaller.

**V. Q. When is a trade permit required?**

**A.** Trade permits (electrical, mechanical, plumbing) are required when:

1. Any electrical wire, conduit, or raceway is installed.
2. Any electrical service is repaired, replaced or upgraded.
3. Any extension of an existing electrical circuit.
4. Installation of a new electrical circuit.
5. A furnace or air conditioner is installed or replaced.

6. New duct work is installed.
7. New flue installed or existing flue replaced.
8. Install new or modify existing water or waste lines.
9. Water heater.

A permit is **not** required for:

1. Minor maintenance such as changing a switch, receptacle, light fixture and bulbs.
2. Replacing a grounded outlet with a CFCI receptacle.
3. Low voltage wiring for thermostats or other related heating/AC controls.
4. Low voltage wiring for TV, sound systems, alarms and telephones.
5. Co-ax cables for antennas and computers.
6. Wiring replacement furnaces or air conditioning from an existing disconnect where wires are of adequate size.
7. Service-related work such as replacing fuses, circuit breakers, motors, or controls in existing building or appliances. This includes heating elements of electric ranges, furnaces and water heaters.
8. Service work on furnaces or air conditioners but it must be done by a licensed mechanical contractor.
9. Replacing sinks, showers, bathtubs, faucets, if existing water and waste lines are not changed or modified, but work must be done by a licensed plumber.

If a **trade permit** is required, the permit must be obtained by a licensed contractor. A homeowner/occupant may do some trade work on his own home, if he occupies that home. A test may be required for some work.