

# **City of Oak Ridge Permit Process General Information**

## **Scope**

This section is a brief overview of the permitting process, including building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits, for the City of Oak Ridge Community Development Department located at 200 S. Tulane Ave Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830.

## **Organizational Context**

The City of Oak Ridge Community Development Department consists of the Planning Division and Building Codes Enforcement Division. Each division works in conjunction with and under the supervision of the City Manager's Office. The department also works in conjunction with other local, state and federal departments and agencies as necessary.

## **Zoning / Codes Enforcement**

The Planning Division enforces zoning and sign regulations, including permitted land uses, building setbacks, lot coverage, number and height of buildings, number and location of signs, and other aspects of zoning. Other responsibilities include reviewing requests for rezoning or subdivision of property, approval of plats, and issuance of home occupation permits. Staff provides guidance to the Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, and City Council on zoning amendments, rezoning of property and site plan submittals.

## **Building / Codes Enforcement**

The Building Codes Enforcement Division enforces commercial and residential regulations of the 2012 edition of the International Code Council through the plan review and inspection processes. This division accepts applications for construction permits and Board of Construction Appeals, collects fees, schedules inspections, issues permits, maintains permit record files and issues occupancy certificates.

## **Other Departments and Agencies**

Other local, state and federal departments and agencies administer many of the regulations related to building permits. The local utility districts regulate sewer, water and electric connections. The Public Works Department reviews and approves applications for land disturbance permits. The City of Oak Ridge Fire Department aids with fire safety reviews.

## **Permit Process Details**

Planning ahead for your project is very important due to the various time frames required for different types of permits. The total time it takes to get a permit can be as little as a few days for simple projects or several months for complex projects or when special reviews or variances are required.

## **Application**

Applications for permits can be made between the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday in the City of Oak Ridge Community Development and Codes Office located at 200 S. Tulane Ave Oak Ridge, TN 37830. For commercial occupancies, a plans review fee will be charged at the time of application. Building permit fees will be charged at the time of permit issuance. General questions can be directed to Tessa Powell at (865) 425-3532.

City-licensed electrical, mechanical and plumbing contractors can obtain permits for commercial work up to \$25,000. For projects over \$25,000 the proper state contractor's license is required, as well as proof of Workman's Compensation Insurance for all permits. The homeowner can only obtain electrical and plumbing permits when he/she is the owner and occupies the single family residence in question (a homeowner affidavit must be provided).

## **Fees**

Permit and plan review fees are based on the value of the work to be performed or on the type of permit in some cases. For a complete listing of all fees please refer to the attached fee schedule. All fees shall be payable to the City of Oak Ridge.

## **Commercial and Residential Plan Review**

Prior to the issuance of a permit, an application and associated plans are reviewed for compliance with all regulations. The plan review process may range from a simple setback check by the office staff for an accessory building to a thorough examination by zoning codes enforcement, storm water, and building safety plan examiners of all documents pertaining to a new commercial building. When the submitted plans are reviewed, there may be requests for additional information. Revisions are to be submitted for review in the same manner as for a new application. After all plan reviews are complete and all required information is received, the applicant will be notified and the permit can be issued following final payment. Any field change orders made during construction must have plans submitted for review before a certificate of occupancy will be issued. Refer to the sections on Commercial Permit Process and Residential Permit Process for additional information.

## **Conditions**

Each permit covers all work on a project including plumbing, electrical and mechanical. A permit issued shall be considered to be a license to proceed with the work and not as authority to violate, cancel, alter, or set aside any of the provisions of the technical codes, nor shall issuance of a permit prevent the building official from thereafter requiring a correction of errors in plans, construction, or violations of the codes.

## **Time limit**

Building permits are valid for the entire duration of a project, unless the work is not started within six months (180 days) or the work is stopped for six months (180 days), in which case a new permit will be required. If a permit is not picked up within six months (180 days), a new permit will be required. This requirement is strictly enforced.

## **Inspections**

After a permit is issued it is the contractor or owners responsibility to schedule all required inspections. All inspection requests must be made by 4:00 PM and will be scheduled for the next business day. The job address and permit number will be required when scheduling all inspections. To schedule inspections call 865-425-3532.

## **Certificates**

A Certificate of Occupancy or a Certificate of Completion will be issued to the contractor listed on the permit after all inspections are complete and all fees are paid. Conditional or temporary certificates may be issued at the discretion of the Building Official.

## **Adopted Codes**

The following is a current list of the codes adopted by the City of Oak Ridge.

- 2012 International Building Code (IBC)
- 2012 International Residential Code (IRC)
- 2012 International Fire Code (IFC)
- 2012 International Plumbing Code (IPC)
- 2012 International Mechanical Code (IMC)
- 2012 International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC)
- 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)
- 2011 National Electric Code (NEC)
- 2009 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities (ICC A 117.1-2009)
- 2012 International Property Maintenance Code

# Residential Permit Process

## **Building Permit Application and Construction Drawings Review**

1. Advised: Informal discussion with city staff about the project associated with a building permit. To discuss building and code information, please contact Tessa Powell at [tmpowell@oakridgetn.gov](mailto:tmpowell@oakridgetn.gov) (865.425.3532). To discuss zoning and setback information, please contact Sherith Colverson at [scolverson@oakridgetn.gov](mailto:scolverson@oakridgetn.gov) (865.425.3531).
2. Submit the building permit application to Community Development and include two (2) complete sets of construction drawings with site layout plan, detailed scope of work, and a land disturbance permit application.
3. The review of construction documents and site layout plans is two separate procedures; however, they may occur simultaneously. Building Permit application is reviewed for compliance with regulations by staff and approved as submitted or with revisions from the Community Development (Planning & Building Codes Enforcement Divisions), Public Works and Electric department. In rare cases, the fire department may need to review the permit.
4. A land disturbance permit, foundation survey, easement encroachment form and/or elevation certificate may be required depending on project conditions.
5. Once payment for the building permit is received, the City issues the building permit.
6. Additional permits for mechanical, plumbing and electrical permits must be obtained separately by City of Oak Ridge licensed contractor.

## **Certificate of Occupancy**

1. Nearing the completion of a project, contractors should contact city staff and let them know when they would like to obtain a certificate of occupancy. Notifying staff as early as possible will aid staff in meeting the request of the contractor.
2. All rough-in and final inspections must be completed and approved, including building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical.
3. To schedule final building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical inspections contact the Building Codes Enforcement Division (865.425.3532).
4. In the event all building and site requirements have not been met, a temporary certificate of occupancy can be issued for any incomplete items. The list of deficiencies will be documented with the temporary certificate of occupancy.
5. If a temporary certificate of occupancy is issued, a contractor should complete all deficiencies documented with the temporary certificate of occupancy, and schedule inspections using the contact provided above when ready for a permanent certificate of occupancy.
6. Once all the above inspections and requirements have been met a permanent certificate of occupancy will be issued.

# Commercial Permit Process

## Site Plan Review

1. Informal meeting with city staff for the proposed project. Please contact Andrea Kupfer at [akupfer@oakridgetn.gov](mailto:akupfer@oakridgetn.gov) (865.425.3580).
2. Initial project approved to proceed.
3. Submit application, fee, 7 site plans, and site plan checklist.
4. Site plan review is required for non-residential uses or residential uses with more than four attached housing units. The following projects are exempt from site plan review.
  - Reuse or interior renovation of an existing building, provided the proposed use is permitted.
  - Exterior renovations which are cosmetic and do not increase the usable floor space of the structure.
5. Site plans are reviewed for compliance with regulations by staff from the Community Development (Planning & Building Codes Enforcement Divisions), Public Works, Electric, and Fire Departments.
6. The review of all utilities is conducted in-house by City staff. The Public Works Department reviews all items related to sewer, water, storm water and land disturbance. The Electric Department reviews all items related to electric.
7. Site plan review meetings are held on Monday's at 2:00PM with all City staff.
8. Planning Commission approval of the site plan is required for all proposed uses of a parcel/lot in the UB-2, B-1, O-2 and MH-1 zoning districts.
9. Site plan is then approved as submitted or with revisions.
10. Site plan approval is required prior to issuance of the building permit and/or land disturbance permit.
11. Issuance of a land disturbance permit authorizes site activities.

## Building Permit Application and Construction Drawings Review

1. Submit the building permit application, 2 complete sets of construction drawings with site layout plan, detailed scope of work and payment of building plan review fee. A PDF of the construction drawings should be submitted to [ablackwell@oakridgetn.gov](mailto:ablackwell@oakridgetn.gov).
2. A PDF of the site layout plan should also be submitted at [akupfer@oakridgetn.gov](mailto:akupfer@oakridgetn.gov).
3. The review of construction documents and site layout plans is two separate procedures; however, they may occur simultaneously.
4. Plans are reviewed and approved as submitted or with revisions by building code officials and the Fire Department.
5. A land disturbance permit, foundation survey, easement encroachment form and/or elevation certificate may be required depending on project conditions.
6. Once payment for the building permit is received, the City issues the building permit.
7. Additional permits for mechanical, plumbing and electrical permits must be obtained separately by City of Oak Ridge licensed contractor.

## **Certificate of Occupancy**

1. Nearing the completion of a project, contractors should contact city staff and let them know when they would like to obtain a certificate of occupancy. Notifying staff as early as possible will aid staff in meeting the request of the contractor.
2. All rough-in and final inspections must be completed and approved, including building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, fire, zoning, landscaping, and parking, as well as all public works, engineering and electrical departments required inspections.
3. To schedule a zoning, landscaping, parking, and utilities inspection contact the Planning Division: Andrea Kupfer (865.425.3580)
4. To schedule a final fire marshal inspection contact the Oak Ridge Fire Department (865.425.3520)
5. To schedule final building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical inspections contact the Building Codes Enforcement Division (865.425.3532)
6. If changes were made from the approved documents during construction, an as built set of drawings for the building and a plat of correction for the site may be required.
7. In the event all building and site requirements have not been met, a temporary certificate of occupancy can be issued provided a bond is posted for any unfinished site improvements. The list of deficiencies will be documented with the temporary certificate of occupancy.
8. If a temporary certificate of occupancy is issued, a contractor should complete all site improvements, provide all required as built drawings and plats of correction requested by staff, and schedule inspections using the contacts provided above when ready for a permanent certificate of occupancy.
9. Once all the above inspections and requirements have been met a permanent certificate of occupancy will be issued and the posted bond released.

