



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **Building Permit Application Frequently Asked Questions**

### **PLEASE READ**

**This will save you, your contractor and staff time.**

**When is a building permit required?** As a general rule, if you are constructing a temporary or permanent structure, you will need a building permit. A building permit is required for any new structure, adding square footage, converting the basement or garage to living space; moving a structure to another location on the site; changes to the interior layout of the building including moving walls, changing structural components and other interior improvements such as remodeling; demolition of a structure or demolition of interior space; solar panels (ground and roof mount) systems; installation of new energy systems (geothermal, solar panels, other); docks; boathouses; decks, ADA improvements; accessory dwelling unit (ADU), garage, shed, carport, in-ground swimming pool and other buildings and structures.

**What types of projects or improvements DO NOT need a building permit?** Refer to the definition of Structure in the Zoning Ordinance. A building permit is not required for the following types of repairs or improvements: alarm systems; caulking; electrical repairs such as faulty light fixtures, switches and outlets; installing a fence; minor plumbing repairs or replacement of kitchen or bathroom faucet fixtures such as fixing a leaky faucet, traps, caulking in a kitchen or bath; carpet installation, sanding floors or replacing flooring; the installation of appliances such as installing a dishwasher, stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer or other household appliances; installing insulation; locks for doors and windows; interior and exterior painting; patching a wall; repairs or replacement of existing interior energy systems such as furnace, hot water heater, or trash compactor; staining or treatment of a deck or dock; building or repair of a stonewall; wallpapering; minor household maintenance issues; replacing windows and doors in the same location; interior demolition, as a result of a plumbing mishap or other minor home maintenance, or if immediate repair is needed; replacing a damaged or broken cabinet (does not include remodel of kitchen and bathroom); roofing repair or replacement: IN KIND ONLY; i.e. shingle to shingle, metal to metal; wall papering; other minor interior or exterior home repair; the placement of lawn furniture, portable barbeque grills, wells and well heads serving individual lots, landscaped features (including patios, steps, walkways and retaining walls), fences, stone walls, animal shelters under 40 square feet, children's swing sets, children's tree houses (provided no utilities of any kinds are connected), dumpsters, temporary portable toilets, flagpoles, sandboxes, playhouses and other playground equipment, free standing hot tubs (not including the deck, pad or slab on which it is placed), propane tanks serving individual residential properties (not including the deck, pad or slab on which it is placed), heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment, generators (not including the slab), Essential Services equipment (cabinets for switching, connecting and distributing electric power, telephone, cable and fiber optics), tents used for camping or temporary functions and gatherings and equipment.

**Is a plot plan or survey required?** A building permit application must be accompanied by a plot plan drawing of the site. You are responsible for accurately showing the property boundaries and location of structures and features. You should NOT rely on the tax map to prepare the plot plan, particularly if your application involves a new structure, a change in the footprint of a structure or any change that would reduce a setback. Refer to your deed and or consult a surveyor. In order to prepare an accurate plot plan, it

is strongly recommended that you have a survey done of the property. If the site includes sensitive site features such as wetlands, streams, or the property is located in any of the Town's Overlay zoning districts, such as the Shoreland Overlay District, Floodplain Overlay District, Wetland Conservation Overlay District, Streams Conservation Overlay District, or Steep Slope Overlay District, or any other districts which serve to protect local natural resources, and if any new structures are proposed, or any use is proposed which may reduce the setback to said natural features, a survey that is less than ten (10) years old showing the location of the features and property boundary lines must be provided. The sensitive site features boundaries must be based on a site survey provided by a NH licensed surveyor. If the building permit relates to a structure or other action that will be within the applicable required setback plus 50 feet from any property boundary, that specific property boundary must be identified based on a boundary survey plan, provided that this requirement will not apply if the proposal relates to an existing structure and would not reduce the setback distance to any dimension of the structure from the property boundary. If the survey is older than ten years, the applicant must affirm in writing that there are grounds to believe the survey remains reliable. If only one boundary line is an issue, you may rely on other known surveys prepared for the adjacent property, if such boundary line is included in said survey of the property. All surveys submitted with a building permit application must include the name, stamp and signature of a NH licensed surveyor.

**How long does it take to get a building permit?** If a complete application is submitted, it generally takes 15-30 days, or less. Per RSA 676:13 a completed application for a building permit will be approved or denied within 30 days; and if a nonresidential application or residential application that encompasses more than 10 dwelling units, it shall be approved or denied within 60 days. Once staff reviews the completed application, it is forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Administrator and Town Administrator for approval or denial. You will be notified by the front desk staff when your building permit is available for pickup.

**What Building Codes must be followed?** The Town of New London has not adopted any building codes; however, you must be in compliance with the New Hampshire Building Code or State Building Code, refer to RSA 155-A, as may be amended. Please contact your contractor or other professional to assist you with any specific questions or details related to these codes.

**Do I need to hire an architect if I am building a new house or changing the interior layout of the structure?** No, you do not need to hire an architect, unless it is required per RSA 310-A Joint Board of Licensure and Certification. Refer to the following links for specific details. You may prepare your own floor plan drawings, unless required by the RSA (see Section 310-A:52). Any plans submitted must include enough details to adequately show the existing layout and proposed layout of the structure, noting all proposed changes to the structure.

**Does the Town of New London have a Building Inspector?** The Town of New London does not have a building inspector. The Town does not inspect building construction or verify if a foundation is correctly located, or other aspects of the building or site construction. The property owner is advised to consult with other professionals if you have any questions regarding setbacks, construction requirements or other technical questions about the construction. This may save you time and money in the long run.

**How long do I have to complete my building project?** A building permit is valid for one (1) calendar year from the date of issuance (date signed by the Town). The Town may grant a one-year extension to the building permit provided it has not already expired or will expire before an extension is granted. If you are

applying for an extension, you must submit your application thirty (30) days in advance of the expiration date, or you may need to submit a new application.

**Must I display the approved building permit?** Yes, the approved building permit must be posted in a prominent place on the building or site until the work is completed.

**Is there a fee and is it refundable?** Yes, there is a building permit fee (please refer to the attached fee schedule). The application fees must be submitted with the completed application. Checks can be made payable to the Town of New London. You may pay with cash, but please do not mail cash. The Town does not accept credit/debit card payments. The fee is non-refundable even if the application is denied. If you submit the incorrect amount you will be asked to submit the correct amount when you pick up the approved permit. All fees must be paid in full before the permit is issued.

**Can a building permit be appealed?** Yes, a building permit can be appealed.

**Can I get a building permit if my property is on a private road?** Per RSA 674:41.

**What are setbacks?** Setbacks are requirements of the New London Zoning Ordinance which must be met to place a structure, or other improvement on the property. Setbacks vary by which zoning district the property is located in. Refer to the New London Zoning Ordinance, which is available on the Town's website or for purchase at the Town Office. There may also be setbacks required for various State permits.

**Does the Town issue a Certificate of Occupancy (CO)?** The Town does not issue a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). A Change of Use (Occupancy) or Layout of a Non-Residential property or building may require review and approval by the Fire Chief and Planning and Zoning Administrator per the Site Plan Regulations.

**Can vegetation be removed or cleared prior to getting the building permit?** In most instances, yes. However in some instances other approval may be required. Questions regarding an Intent to Cut should be directed to the Land Use & Assessing Coordinator. If your property includes sensitive natural features such as wetlands, streams, or located on a pond or lake, you may need Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and or Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) approval prior to any cutting or removal of trees. For many properties, cutting vegetation can be done without any Town approvals.

**Is asbestos testing and abatement required?** Yes. Refer to the pamphlet titled, "Renovation, Demolition and Asbestos- What Building Owners & Contractors in New Hampshire Should Know." This is a NH. Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), pamphlet 2011(or as many be updated). Please contact NHDES directly with questions.

**Can I demolish a structure by burning it?** Questions regarding a controlled burn to demolish a structure should be directed to the Town Fire Chief. It is the owner's responsibility to insure that all DIG SAFE and Utilities are contacted (to disconnect services) if a structure is burned or demolished.

**Why do I need to contact the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)?** You need to contact the PUC to get a PUC approval number for energy-related improvements if you are building a new home and for some improvements. Please contact the PUC directly at 603-271-2431 regarding any questions you may have

about specific requirements for windows, doors, insulation, and other energy home improvements. If a PUC approval number is not required, please be sure to state that on your building permit application.

**When can I pick up my building permit?** Town staff will call you when the building permit is available for pick-up. The building permit is generally available to pick-up the day after it has been approved. You can pick up the approved permit at the receptionist desk on the first floor.

**How do I know if my property is enrolled in the Current Use program?** Current Use status is reported on your property tax card – for a copy, contact the Assessing Department at the Town Office or visit the Assessing page on the Town website: [www.nl-nh.com](http://www.nl-nh.com).

**What is the maximum building height?** Buildings may be no more than 35 feet in height. Refer to the Zoning Ordinance.

**Are there penalties for not getting a building permit and do I need an After the Fact Building Permit?** Yes, the Town may impose penalties and after the fact fees, and a building permit is required.

**How do I know if my property is located in a flood zone?** The FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) for Merrimack County are available in the Town Office for review. You can also find information on the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) website.

**What State approvals may be needed?** Each property is unique and has various features, which may include proximity to a pond/lake, wetlands, streams or other sensitive environmental features. You may need approvals from the State, including New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). NHDES application materials and instructions are available on the NHDES website. If you are unfamiliar with the State process or permits, you are advised to contact a professional to assist you in the permitting process. This may include a surveyor, engineer, septic designer, landscape architect, storm water professional or other appropriate professional depending on your project. You are advised to be proactive, and retain the professional best suitable for your project. This generally saves you time. If you are required to have state approval, for example a Shoreland Permit, please include a copy of the approval with your application materials.

**What should I do with the construction debris?** Disposal of all construction materials must be in compliance with all Federal, State and local laws, rules and regulations. You are advised to contact a private hauler to remove all construction debris. If there is asbestos, you must dispose of it in accordance with all applicable State laws, refer to the NHDES pamphlet (found at the Town Offices) *Asbestos- What Building Owners & Contractors in New Hampshire Should Know*, 2011 or as amended. NHDES contact number: (603) 271-1370.

**Will someone from the Town visit the property?** Yes, this may include someone from the Assessing Department, Planning and Zoning or other Town Departments. The Fire Chief may inspect property for Fire and Life Safety codes issues.

**May the Town ask for additional information?** Yes, the Town may ask for additional information. Please submit the required information to avoid delays in processing your application. A complete application will help you secure your permit in a more timely fashion.

**Town Departments or other governmental agencies that you may need to contact**

- ✓ New London Public Works: a new driveway or alteration of an existing driveway, and for sewer connections or modifications. A fee is charged for any additional living area added to a structure (603) 526-6337
- ✓ New London Springfield Water Precinct: water connections, including upgrades and or changes (603) 526-4441
- ✓ New London Fire Department: Life Safety and Fire Code compliance (603)526-6073.
- ✓ New London Transfer Station: regarding disposal of construction debris or other materials (603) 526-9499
- ✓ NH Department of Environmental Services (DES): for septic, wetland, shore land, hazardous waste, asbestos removal, lead abatement and other environmental related permits [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov) (603) 271-3503
- ✓ NH Department of Transportation, District # 2 Office: for a driveway permits with access on a State Road (603) 448-2654
- ✓ NH Public Utilities Commission (PUC): for Energy Code Compliance (603) 271-2431.
- ✓ US Environmental Protection Agency: EPA- lead abatement requirements, pre 1978 structures. (617) 918-1773
- ✓ Architect's Stamp, refer to provisions of NH RSA, Chapter 310-A, Joint Board of Licensure and Certification
- ✓ FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency <https://www.fema.gov/base-flood>