



City of Milford, Connecticut Information Regarding Permits

This document serves as an introduction to the permitting requirements and policies of the City of Milford. It is not comprehensive and is not intended to substitute for the regulations and codes followed by the city.

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1. Why should I get a permit?

There are many important reasons to obtain the required permit(s) and to obtain the required inspections for your project

- **Protects property value** - Your home or business is an investment. If your project does not comply with the codes and standards adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced.
- **Saves money** - Property insurance may not cover work or damages caused by work done without permits and inspections.
- **Makes selling property easier** - When property is sold through a multiple-listing association, the owner must disclose any improvements or repairs made and if permits and inspections were obtained. Many financial institutions will not finance a purchase without proof of a final inspection. If you decide to sell a home or building that has had modifications without a permit, you may be required to tear down the addition, leave it unoccupied, or do costly repairs.
- **Improves safety** - The permit review and inspections process is designed to ensure that all construction is safe. By following code guidelines, your completed project will meet minimum standards of safety and will be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future occupants. Mandatory inspections complement the contractor's experience and act as a system of checks and balances resulting in a safer project.
- **It's the law** - Work without a permit may be subject to removal or other costly remedies.

2. What activities require a building permit?

The Building Division reviews all construction to ensure that structures are built properly (i.e. “to Code”) and can be occupied safely for their intended purpose. A building permit must be obtained before beginning construction, alteration or repairs, other than ordinary repairs. (Ordinary repairs are nonstructural repairs and do not include addition to, alteration of, or replacement or relocation of water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electrical wiring, or mechanical or other work for which a permit is required by the building official). Work requiring permits includes decks, window replacements, installation of a wood or pellet stove, and installation of a pre-fabricated shed on your property.

- Additions to buildings, including garages, porches, and decks
- Interior work that requires structural work
- Finishing of basements
- Swimming pools over 24 inches in depth
- Sheds (including prefabricated sheds), barns, garages, greenhouses
- Wood and gas stoves, fireplaces
- Roofing, siding, and replacement windows
- Signs
- Demolition
- Electrical service changes and repair

Electric, plumbing, heating, air conditioning and oil tank work done in connection with a building permit require separate permits for each function.

3. What activities require a planning and zoning permit?

Planning and Zoning regulates the activities allowed on your property and where the structures that contain these uses can be located. Construction, reconstruction, extension, enlargement, moving, or altering any building or another structure and prior to the use or occupancy of any land, building, or other structure requires a zoning permit. This approval is required **before** obtaining a building permit.

The following building permit activities do **not** require zoning approval:

- Re-roofing, re-siding, or door/window replacement (except for changes in size or projection, which do require approval)
- Minor interior renovations that do not alter the exterior of the structure, such as bathroom remodels, sheetrock and wall repair.

- Foundation repairs, except where the property is in a flood hazard zone
- Gas fireplaces and wood fireplaces with a roof flue
- Chimney liners
- Demolition
- Change of light fixtures
- New flooring
- Slabs
- Demolition

In addition, a change of use of a property (e.g., retail to restaurant or residential to commercial) must go through the planning and zoning approval process.

We strongly recommend that you make an appointment with our office to discuss the zoning regulations for your site that may require a hearing before our zoning board.

4. What activities require Inland Wetlands approvals?

The Inland Wetland Agency regulates activities proposed in an inland wetland or watercourse and within 150' (or an upland review area) of wetlands or watercourses. The location of the proposed activities in relation to the wetlands may be determined in the Inland Wetland Office. While there may not be wetlands on your property, wetlands located on an adjacent property may require review of your proposed activity.

The Inland Wetland Agency regulates any activities proposed involving:

- the storage, removal, or deposition of material,
- any obstruction, construction, alteration or pollution of a wetland or watercourse
- any earth moving, filling, construction,
- clear-cutting of trees,
- discharging of waters,

Within the 100' & 150' upland review areas the intent is to review the proposed activity and to apply only such restrictions as are needed to avoid adverse impacts in the inland wetlands and watercourses and are not intended to be exclusionary setbacks. The Inland Wetland Agency may rule that any activity in any non-wetland or non-watercourse area impacts or has the potential to impact or affect wetlands or watercourses and therefore is a regulated activity.

Inland Wetland approval is required **before** obtaining a Zoning permit.

The following permit activities do **not** require Inland Wetland approval:

- Interior renovations that do not alter the exterior of the structure
- Re-roofing, re-siding, or door/window replacement (except for changes in size or projection, which do require review)

The Inland Wetland Agent is available to review proposals and plans prior to submission of an application to determine the level of permitting required and what information will be necessary to review the application.

5. Do I need approvals from other departments?

In addition to building and planning and zoning approvals, the following may be required:

- Fire Marshall approval is required for everything other than one and two family dwellings and their accessory structures.
- Sewer Department approval is required if the structure is on or will be connected to public sewers.
- Health Department approval is required for food establishments or connections to a septic tank, as well as for swimming pools. In addition, the Health Department must approve most projects on properties with a septic system if that project involves digging (e.g., footings for a deck) or will affect the load on the septic system (e.g., expansion of a home).
- Engineering approval is required for work affecting curbs, sidewalks, and for driveways connecting with the public right-of-way.

You must receive a tax clearance certificate from the Tax Collector's Office showing that no taxes are owed on the property. We cannot issue a permit on any property where taxes are owed.

6. Who may apply for a permit?

A homeowner or the homeowner's authorized representative may apply for a permit. An authorized representative must have authorization in writing to apply for a permit on the homeowner's behalf.

7. Who can do the work?

A homeowner can do his own work, if he occupies the home and does not rent out any part of it. The homeowner is still required to get a permit. With this exception, any individual doing permitted work must be licensed and registered with the State of Connecticut.

Using a licensed contractor provides protection to the homeowner from being charged for work and materials not provided. Materials and suppliers and subcontractors can place a lien on your home if they do not receive payment from your contractor. Trade licenses for those persons doing Home Improvement, Plumbing, Electrical, or Mechanical provide some assurance that they have adequate knowledge and training in those fields.

If you are not hiring a registered contractor, you are missing out on \$15,000 worth of protection! The Department of Consumer Protection protects the homeowner by the Home Improvement Guaranty Fund. The fund can reimburse consumers up to \$15,000 who are unable to collect for loss or damage suffered from a registered contractor's performance or offer to perform a home improvement. To find out if your contractor is registered contact the Department of Consumer Protection at 1.800.842.2649 or access the web site at <https://www.elicense.ct.gov/>

8. What codes are used by the City of Milford?

Planning and Zoning is governed by The City of Milford Zoning Regulations. A complete copy of these regulations may be obtained from our offices for \$40.

Building Codes used by our Building division are:

- 2003 International Building Code
- 2003 International Residential Code
- 2003 International Existing Building Code
- 2005 National Electric Code
- 2003 International Plumbing Code
- 2003 International Mechanical Code
- 2006 International Energy Conservation Code
- 2003 ICC/ANSI A117.1/2003 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities

All of the above-mentioned codes have been supplemented by the State Of Connecticut To obtain copies of the state building code, or to research specific code requirements, see the following link:

<http://www.ct.gov/dps/cwp/view.asp?a=2148&q=305412>

9. Are there any special issues I should be aware of related to Milford permits?

Generators

Standby electric generators can provide you an extra sense of security in view of Connecticut's unpredictable weather and the occasional resulting power outage. However, even small, portable electric generators - if they're used improperly - can threaten your safety and the safety of power company linemen working on the electrical system. All generators should be installed by a licensed electrician and receive a permit.

Sheds

Sheds and any other outbuildings (except treehouses) require approval from Planning and Zoning and must meet required setbacks for accessory structures.

Your building permit application for a prefabricated shed must include the Brochure or Data Sheet from Manufacturer: minimum snow load information (30 lbs. per square foot) and rating information (for 110 mile per hour winds). For installation of a shed, mechanical fasteners/anchors must be properly fastened to resist 110 mile per hour design wind loads. Fasteners cannot be made of plastic.

High Winds

Milford is designated a High Wind Zone, which results in specific requirements especially affecting doors, roofs, and windows.

Flood Hazard Zones

As a coastal community, some of Milford's residential and commercial properties are subject to periodic flooding. If your property is located in a Flood Hazard Zone, special construction regulations may apply to eliminate possible loss of life and reduce property damage in case of a Flood.

Fences and Walls

Fences and walls not exceeding three feet in height in any front yard or six feet in height in any side or rear yard do not require a zoning permit. Wire, chain link, or similar fences which do not impair visibility may be four feet high in any front yard. On corner lots, front yards are required on both street frontages with a designated view corridor required for maximum traffic visibility; on through lots, front yards are required on all streets.

Significant restrictions exist for fences on yards abutting Long Island Sound, rivers, and tidal wetlands. Please contact our office for more details.

Retaining walls greater than 12 inches may require a zoning permit and in some cases may require a design plan from a licensed engineer. Please contact our office for more details.

Fences over 6 feet in height are allowed only in the City's Industrial Districts and requires both a zoning and a building permit.

Finishing a Basement or Attic

A permit is required to finish a basement or attic.

Adding a Kitchen to a Residence or Outbuilding

In the City's Single Family Residential zones, adding a second kitchen to a residence or outbuilding is a violation of our zoning requirements and is prohibited.

Accessory Apartments

The creation of an accessory apartment in a single family residence to house extended family members must meet the requirements of the City of Milford Zoning Regulations Section 3.1.1.7. These requirements are complex and anyone seeking to create such an apartment must first meet with our staff. Additional details are available on our web site and in the brochure "Accessory Apartments."

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

When alterations or additions requiring a permit occur in a home, the entire dwelling must be provided with smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Contact our office for more information on location and quantity of detectors required.

Swimming Pools

Outdoor private swimming pools MUST comply with the State Building Code barrier and entrapment protection minimum regulations. The purpose for these provisions is to provide an effective barrier surrounding the pool area to reduce the potential for young children to gain uncontrolled access, and to provide a level of protection against possible entrapment at the pool suction inlets. Inflatable swimming pools which can contain water over twenty-four inches deep is a relatively new product which has been made available to the Connecticut Consumer. The inflatable walls of an above grade inflatable swimming pool,

(which contains water over twenty-four inches deep), are not an effective pool barrier and require a pool barrier which is typically a fence enclosure.

The 2005 State Building Code provides detailed provisions for barriers around swimming pools along with entrapment protection for swimming pool and spa suction outlets. These requirements address:

- minimum heights and maximum openings allowed in fences
- criteria for the fence gates and latches
- criteria for the means of direct entry into a pool area from the house
- criteria for the pool and spa suction outlet cover and grate
- minimum number and separation distance of suction outlets
- criteria for circulation systems equipped with atmospheric vacuum relief systems
- minimum and maximum depths for pool vacuum cleaner fittings
- criteria for power safety covers

10. What work is exempt from permits?

The following work does not require a building permit for one and two family residential dwellings only.

Building work

- Fences below 6 feet high. (See above for more requirements.)
- Retaining walls below 3 ft. in height measured from finished grade at the bottom of the wall to finished grade at the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
- Sidewalks, driveways and on-grade concrete or masonry patios not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below. (Work being done on driveway aprons & sidewalks within the city street right of way does require a permit from the Engineering Department.)
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work not involving structural changes or alterations.
- Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
- Swings, non-habitable tree houses and other playground equipment.
- Window awnings supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and which do not require additional support.

Electrical work

A permit is not required for minor electrical repair work, including replacement of lamps and fuses or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

Gas work

A permit is not required for:

- Portable heating or cooking appliances with a self-contained fuel supply.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Mechanical work

A permit is not required for:

- Portable heating appliances with a self-contained fuel supply.
- Portable ventilation appliances.
- Portable cooling units.
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping contained within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by Chapters 19 through 24 of the Connecticut State Building Code.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Portable evaporative coolers.
- Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 lbs. or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.
- Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Plumbing Permits

A permit is not required for stopping leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe. However, if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace it with new material, this work is considered new work and a permit is required.

A permit is not required for the clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, as long as these do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

11. What documents do I need to obtain a permit?

The level of detail required depends on the size and complexity of the project as well as where it is located. Zoning permits require at a minimum a plot plan drawn to scale. Certain applications require a full A-3 survey conducted by a licensed surveyor. Most building projects require architectural drawings, and some may require drawings stamped by a licensed engineer. Please contact our office for more details.

In addition, building permits require:

- A completed building permit application (samples available on-line)
- A certificate from our tax office indicating that no taxes are owed on the property
- For contractors, proof of workers' compensation insurance
- If required, approvals from other departments (see section 8, above)
- The number and type of drawings requires depends on the type of work. Please contact our office.

12. How much will my permit cost?

The zoning permit application fee is between \$85 and \$95, depending on the scope of the project. Sign permits are a minimum of \$110 and increase for signs over 100 SF.

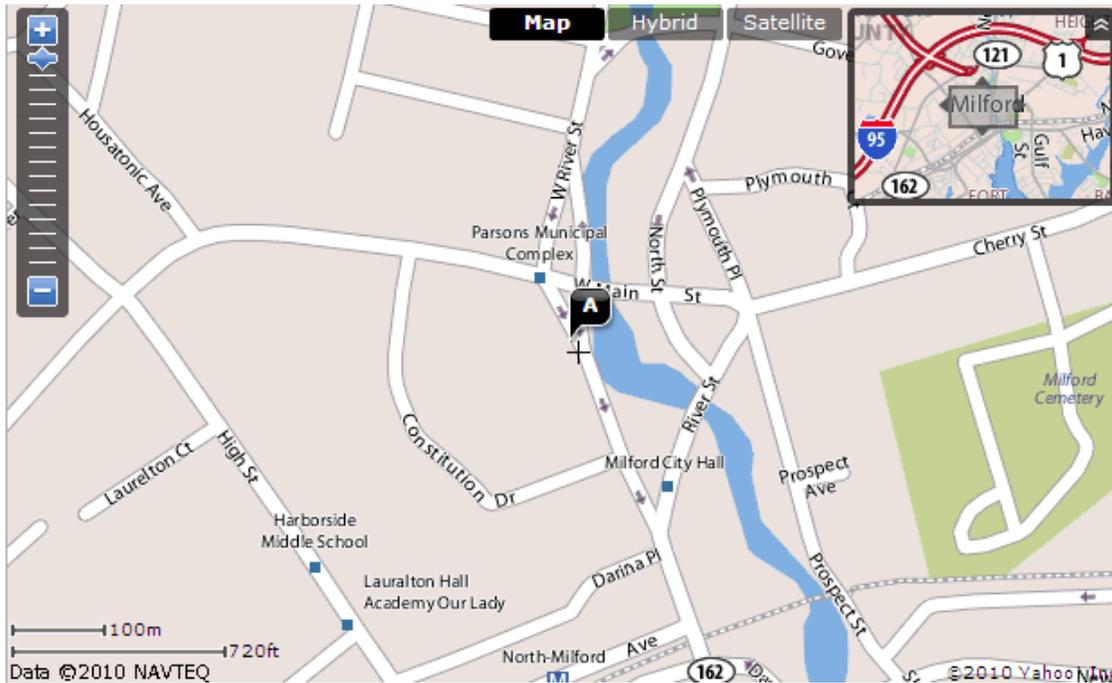
The building department fee is based on the cost of the project, including materials and labor. The schedule is as follows:

Construction Value	Permit Fee
Up to \$1,000	\$15
\$1000.01 - \$5,000,000	\$12 for each \$1000 or fraction thereof (Project cost - \$1,000)*12 + 15=permit fee
Over \$5,000,000	\$6 for each \$1000 or fraction thereof over \$5,000,000

In addition, there is a fee for certificates of occupancy, which are \$15 for one or two family residential homes and up to \$50 for 500,000 square foot buildings.

13. Where and when can I apply for a permit?

The Milford Permit Center is located in the Parsons Government Center, 70 West River Street, Milford, Connecticut. The tax office, planning and zoning, and inland wetlands offices are available in the same building.



Building and Planning and Zoning permit hours are 8:30 am – 11:30 am, Monday-Friday. If you are unable to come during these hours, you may make an appointment.

14. How long does it take to get a permit?

The time required to review and issue a permit varies considerably depending on the current workload in the department, the complexity of the project, and the number of questions that come up during our review. The best way to expedite your permit review is to make sure that the application is complete and the plans fully represent compliance with our regulations and building codes.

Under law, we are required to complete review of any building permit within 30 days.

15. Once I receive a permit, do I need an inspection?

Yes, all work must be inspected. Call our offices at 203-783-3234 to schedule an inspection. Please don't leave requests for inspection on voicemail.

The following inspections are required:

1. Footings – Forms must be inspected and approved before concrete is poured for footings.
2. Foundations must be inspected before any structure is back filled.
3. Mechanical fasteners must be inspected.
4. Framing, rough plumbing, rough heating, and rough electrical work must be inspected and approved before walls are enclosed with any materials and before insulation is installed. Note that decks and similar structures require a framing/flashing inspection.
5. Insulation must be inspected and approved before sheetrock is installed.
6. Final inspection must be completed before any new structure or addition may be occupied.

16. Is there anything else I need to do to get my final approvals?

When construction is complete, and after the final building inspection, you must contact the Planning & Zoning Office to obtain a Certificate of Zoning Compliance.

For commercial or industrial projects, you must also contact the Fire Marshall and request a final inspection, and Building must receive the Fire Marshall's approval letter.

A Certificate of Occupancy will then be issued by the Building Inspector.

17. I have more questions. Who do I call/contact?

Questions directly related to building permits, inspections, and code issues may be directed to our building department at 203-783-3234.

Questions related to zoning and zoning violations may be directed to our planning and zoning office at (203) 783-3245.

The Director of Permitting and Land Use oversees the City of Milford permitting process and can assist you if you need additional information, or if you have a comment, question, or complaint about our process. The director can be reached at (203) 783-3374 or at jmathiasen@ci.milford.ct.us

Attachment A: Building Permit Check-List

- Planning and zoning approval
- Inland wetlands approval for properties within the review parameters of a wetland, as well as for swimming pools.
- City fire marshal approval (for everything other than one or two-family dwellings and their accessory structures)
- Sewer commission department approval – if the structure is on or going to be connected to public sewers
- Health department approval (for food establishments, connection to a septic tank, digging on a lot with a septic tank, or work that would affect the requirements of the septic system)
- Tax clearance certificate
- Worker's compensation certificate (or, if a homeowner, an affidavit form attesting that he has workers' compensation)