



# FAQ SHEET

## PLANNING & CODES DEPARTMENT Frequently Asked Questions

*\*Sullivan County's Planning & Codes Department is to assist individuals and contractors in building new projects or remodeling existing ones. Below is a list of frequently asked questions.*

---

### **Q-What are Building Codes?**

Building Codes are the rules, regulations and specifications that the county uses to help ensure quality construction and a safe finished structure. The 2006 IRC was adopted by the County Commission and became effective on January 1, 2010. Prior to that date, a Zoning Compliance Permit was all that was required since September 2, 1988.

---

### **Q- What is a Building Permit?**

A building permit is required by county resolution that grants permission to construct, enlarge, alter, repair or demolish a structure. Permission to change the use of a building, excavate or fill land. Separate grading permits are also required by the TN Department of Environment & Conservation – Stormwater Pollution Prevention Planning division (call 423.854.5400)

---

### **Q- Why are inspections needed?**

County code requires a permit be issued when work is to be performed on a structure. The inspections that follow the issuance of the permit may uncover unsatisfactory work, faulty materials or violations of the code that could result in unsafe and hazardous conditions for you, your family, your employees or the general public.

---

### **Q-When do I need a permit?**

For anything other than cosmetic repairs (painting or carpet for example). Detached Residential Accessory Structures less than 120 square feet are also exempt from permitting but still shall be located in the rear yard a minimum of 8 feet from the sides and rear property lines.

---

### **Q- When should I get the permit?**

The permit needs to be bought before any work starts.

---

**Q- As a homeowner can I do my own work?**

You may do your own work if you own and occupy the house.

---

**Q- What if it is rental Property?**

You can do the cosmetic repairs. All other work will have to be done by licensed contractors.

---

**Q- If I am a homeowner doing my own work, do I need a permit?**

Yes, everyone is required to get a permit.

---

**Q-If I hire a contractor, who gets the permit?**

The person actually doing the work needs to buy the permit. Whoever signs the permit is responsible for the work.

---

**Q-What are the different types of permits?**

*Building permits* - New, additions or alterations to a structure

*Electrical* - Issued and Inspected by the State Electrical Inspector for each Power Board (AEP, BTES, JCPB)

*Public Sewer line* - for installation or replacement of sewer line (obtain from City Engineering Office)

*Septic System Permit* – obtained from the local field office of TDEC – call 423.323.1673)

*Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan/Grading* - disturbing of land over one acre or part of a large development plan, developer shall obtain General Construction Permit from TDEC in Johnson City – call 423.854.5400 – requires a plan prepared by a licensed professional such as an engineer or landscape architect)

---

**Q- Do I need a permit for utility, storage buildings and carports?**

Yes, please be aware that there are separate guidelines for attached or detached.

---

**Q- What codes are enforced in Sullivan County?**

2006 International Residential Code and Property Maintenance (IRC and PMC)

Current Zoning Resolution

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and all related codes

Flood Damage Prevention Resolution

Historic Zoning Overlay Districts (downtown Blountville and Piney Flats Village)

---

**Q-What information do I need when I get a permit?**

*Single-family-* job cost, address, recorded deed or plat if property was recently purchased

*Commercial-* 2 sets of stamped plans (site, utility, and grading plan) construction cost and address.

---

**Q-If I am building a new house when can I move in?**

After a final inspection has been approved and a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued.

---

**Q- Do I need a permit for a driveway?**

Yes, but that is handled through the County Highway Department. Please contact them at 423.279.2820 for assistance with driveway permits to ensure proper sight visibility and installation of drain tile or contact the local TDOT office if located on a State highway (423. 282.0651).

---

**Q-What does Zoning mean?**

All of Sullivan County is zoned in various ways from agricultural to industrial. This zoning depends on land use, location and size. Each zone has its own requirements i.e.: lot size, building setbacks, signage and land uses permitted.

---

**Q- What if I want to do work to my property and it is in the historical district?**

A Certificate of Appropriateness must first be obtained from the County Historic Zoning Commission.