

Building FAQs

Ask A Builder Form

▼ Do I Need a Building Permit?

See the [When Do I Need a Building Permit Publication](#). A building permit is required for any construction that physically changes or adds structures to your property, or for work regulated by County Codes such as:

- **New Building** – Examples include but are not limited to: dwellings, garages, detached storage sheds (if over 120 square feet contact one of our planners), carports, pole barns, commercial buildings, manufactured housing, or mobile homes.
- **Additions** – Examples include but are not limited to: buildings, swimming pools, decks, retaining walls over 48 inches, and fences over six feet high.
- **Alterations** – Beyond cosmetic, examples include but are not limited to: converting a garage to a family room, re-roofing, dry-walling, insulating, finishing a basement, window replacement, and re-siding.
- **Repairs** – Any repair involving structural members.
- **Installations** – Examples include but are not limited to: wood burning stoves, hot tubs, and solar collectors. We recommend you use the [Ask a Planner Form](#) to determine if a separate planning process may be required prior to submitting a Building Permit Application.

What are the Roofing Requirements?

A permit is required for new or replacement roof coverings. The following are the general roofing requirements:

- Class A roof covering or roof assembly is required in all Wildfire Zones.
- See [Boulder County Wildfire Zone Map](#)
- Reroof projects, including roof replacement and/or roof recover, shall comply with the provisions of the [International Residential Code \(IRC\) section R908](#) for residential one- and two-family dwellings, and their accessory structures, or [International Existing Building Code \(IEBC\) and International Building Code \(IBC\) section 1512](#) for all structures that are not residential one- and two-family dwellings, and their accessory structures.
- Ice and water shield is not required, unless there is evidence of previous damage due to the effects of ice damming or where there is clearly potential for damage due to ice damming, the provisions of International Residential Code ([IRC](#))

Related Links

[Building Safety and Inspection Services](#)

[Building Code](#)

[Building Publications, Applications and Forms](#)

[Building Permits](#)

[Building Permit Application](#)

[Building Permit Fees](#)

[Building Permit Search and Statistics](#)

[Building FAQs](#)

[BuildSmart](#)

[Contractor Licensing in Unincorporated Boulder County](#)

[sections R905.1.2](#), [R905.2.7](#), [R905.4.3.1](#), [R905.5.3.1](#), [R905.6.3.1](#), [R905.7.3.1](#) and [R905.8.3.1](#) or International Building Code (IBC) [1507.1.2](#), and specific roofing materials referenced, as applicable, shall apply.

- Underlayment attachment shall be according to [IRC section R905.1.1](#) or [IBC Section 1507.1.1](#), as applicable, shall apply.
- See [Boulder County Ground Snow Load and Wind Speed Maps](#).
- Asphalt shingles shall be Class 4 impact resistant, tested in accordance with UL 2218, see Boulder County Building Code (BCBC) amendment IBC section 1504.8.1 or IRC amendment section R905.2.4.2, as applicable, shall apply.
- For asphalt shingles [IRC section R905.2](#) or [IBC section 1507.2](#), use the manufacture's high-wind nail pattern or installation instructions and [IRC section R905.2.4.1](#) and [IBC section 1507.2.6](#), as applicable, shall apply.
- Eave and rake drip edge required for both residential per [IRC section R905.2.8.5](#) and commercial per [IBC section 1507.2.8.3](#).
- Residential reroof flashing per [IRC section R908.6](#) and commercial reroof flashing per [IBC section 1512.5](#).
- No mid-roof inspection is necessary.
- Gutters and gutter guards removed for re-roofing and must be reinstalled for inspection.
- Commercial reroof applications require plan submittal and plan review. Provide approved roof covering product manufacturer's data listing with Class A fire classification per [IBC section 1505](#) and assembly details. Additional information may be necessary, including building occupancy classification and type of construction. [International Building Code section 3306](#) and [International Existing Building Code section 1501.6](#) require pedestrian protection during the tear off, loading, and application.

▼ What is Required to Get a Building Permit?

Please review the [Boulder County Building Permits Webpage](#) to determine which type of building permit you may need. Please see [Building Permits for Residential Construction](#) for more information. [EZ BP's \(easy building permits\)](#) are residential building permits that can be applied for that do not require plans for submittal.

All Building Permit applications must be submitted online and include a PDF of the site plan and a complete set of building plans. To submit a Building Permit application, please visit the [Online Application Submittals](#) page for more information. The following may also be required for new buildings, additions, and remodeling:

- **Soils Report** – Soils reports may be required in the mountains and are always required in the plains This area is defined as east of Broadway and east of Foothills Highway.
- **Warranty Deed** – A copy of your warranty deed which has been recorded with the County Clerk and Recorder's Office for new residences and/or recently acquired property.

- **Evidence of Water** – Evidence of water supply as a water tap or letter of commitment from a water department; or, a copy of your approved well permit from the State of Colorado Engineer’s Office in Denver. The State Engineer’s Office can be reached at 303-866-3587.
- **Evidence of Sanitation** – Evidence of sanitation such as a sewer tap or letter of commitment from the sanitation agency; or, a copy of your septic approval form from the Boulder County Health Department. Whenever an addition increases the total number of bedrooms or involves sanitation facilities, Health Department approval will be required.
- **Access** – If your property does not front on a County Road shown on the official Boulder County Road Map, it may be necessary to submit additional information such as recorded access easements or other proof of legal access. So that the inspectors will be able to find your property more easily, a location map should also be submitted unless you are in an easy-to-find location.

What does a Complete Set of Building Plans Include?

The required information will vary depending on the type and scope of your project. However, in general:

- Your planned project must be prepared in a graphic form with a minimum ¼” scale.
- Construction drawings or plans must show all proposed work and details of compliance to the [Boulder County Building Code Amendments](#) and the [Boulder County Land Use Code](#).
- The plans and specifications must be of sufficient clarity to indicate the nature and extent of the proposed work.
- Incomplete plans will be returned to the applicant without review.

Use the following submittal checklists for specific project types:

- [Form: Sign Permit Application Form](#)
- [Publication: Detached Garage Construction](#)
- [Publication: Residential Deck Requirements](#)
- [Publication: Solar Photovoltaic Systems Checklist](#)
- [Publication: Solar Thermal Systems Checklist](#)

Please Note:

- A majority of the plains portion of the county consists of expansive soils and high groundwater. For this reason, a soils report is required for new buildings in areas other than mountainous areas.
- For residential projects creating: new, additions to, or remodel of conditioned floor area, a complete submittal must include all design detail for compliance with the [Boulder County BuildSmart Regulations](#) (IRC Chapter 11: Energy Efficiency).

- For projects located in [Wildfire Zone 1 Map](#) (per [Boulder County Building Code Amendments](#)) exterior building materials are regulated. The proposed exterior materials should be clearly labeled on the plans.

▼ How Long is a Permit Active?

Issued permits are valid indefinitely, provided work is commenced within 180 days of issuance and is not suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days.

▼ When Do I Need Inspections?

The type and number of Required Inspections as per the [Required Inspections and Procedures Document](#) vary depending on the complexity of your project. All requests for Inspection Scheduling as per the [Inspection Coordination and Scheduling Document](#) must be received before 3:30 p.m. the working day prior to the requested inspection in order to assure efficient scheduling and routing of the inspectors. Call the IVR System at 303-441-3925 to schedule inspections. During the scope of your construction project it may be necessary to provide Inspection Reports and Surveys as per the [Inspection Reports and Surveys Document](#). These may include:

- Height surveys
- Setback surveys
- Engineered caisson
- Footing or foundation inspection reports, and
- Fire sprinkler inspection reports

▼ May I Change My Mind or Make Revisions?

Yes.

- If you need to change your application form or building plans prior to issuance, just ask for assistance from the Building Safety and Inspection Services Team.
- If you want to make minor changes to your approved plans, submit your revisions electronically to your specific Plans Examiner as well as to building@bouldercounty.gov.
- The revised plans will be reviewed and one of the approved copies will be returned to you.
- The approved revisions need to be on-site for inspection.
- Additional plan check fees may be required for extensive revisions.

For major plan revisions, an entirely new permit may be required. If the issued permit needs to be withdrawn and replaced with a new permit, you may be eligible for up to

an 80% credit of the original permit fee paid.

▼ If My Property is Within the City Limits, Do I Get a Building Permit from Boulder County?

Boulder County does not have Land Use jurisdiction over cities within Boulder County. However, we do have an agreement with Jamestown to review building permits. If you have a question regarding Building, Code Enforcement, Planning or Zoning within a town or city in Boulder County, please reach out to your [Municipality Contact Within Boulder County](#).

▼ How Do I Become a Licensed Contractor?

Requirements and conditions for issuance of a [Boulder County Contractors License](#) include:

- The submission of a completed [Contractor License Online Application](#).
- Proof you have passed an appropriate exam as per the [Boulder County Contractor License Publication](#) [📄](#) or provide a copy of a valid license issued from an ICC participating jurisdiction
- Proof of Workman's Compensation and Contractor Liability Insurance
- Proof of lawful presence
- Licensing fee paid

You must have all of these required documents at time of application in order to apply for your license. Once your application has been accepted, issuance of the license will take seven business days.

▼ What Does the Term "Setback" Mean?

A setback is a fixed distance from your property line, or in certain cases, a highway centerline. Setbacks vary depending on the zoning district in which your property is located; whether your project is in a Planned Unit Development (PUD) or a newly platted subdivision; and whether or not you are on a corner lot. If in doubt, contact our office at 303-441-3930. View more information in the [Yards, Lot Lines, and Setbacks Publication](#) [📄](#).

When a building application is submitted, the site plan is reviewed to see if the placement of the construction meets the minimum setbacks. If your site plan is not to scale and you do not specify a measurement, we may reject your application as incomplete.

▼ Setback Verification

If your application shows that you are placing your construction exactly or within 20% of the minimum setback, which is your right, please realize that we will require a licensed surveyor to verify that your foundation/construction is correctly placed at this minimum setback because you have no margin of error. We only request that the property line(s) in question be surveyed, not the entire boundary.

If you wish to avoid submitting a survey of the boundary line, the zoning administrator will accept affirmation of the property owner that a setback has been complied with when the proposed distance is 20% greater than the minimum setback; i.e. if the minimum setback is 15 feet and the site plan indicates an actual setback of 18 feet or more, you would not have to have this line surveyed as you exceed the minimum by 20%.

Example: $20\% \times 15' = 3'$ and $15' + 3' = 18'$

If you cannot find an answer to a specific question, submit your question through the [Ask a Building Official Webform](#). A Building Official will then research your question and get an answer back to you within the business day.

Contact Us

Building Safety and Inspection Services

Email: [✉ building@bouldercounty.gov](mailto:building@bouldercounty.gov)

Phone: [📞 303-441-3926](tel:303-441-3926)

Hours

Public Office Hours:

8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday

Virtual Service Hours:

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday

[Schedule an Appointment](#) [↗](#)

Mailing Address

Building Safety and Inspection Services
PO Box 471
Boulder, CO 80306

[Building Safety and Inspection Services](#)

Location

Courthouse Annex Building

[2045 13th St.](#) [↗](#)

Boulder, CO 80302