

Do I need a zoning permit?

The Town of Stowe requires various permits and approvals for development. A zoning permit is required for any residential development project involving:

- New buildings (except accessory buildings under 100 sq. ft. as discussed below)
- Building additions
- Porches, decks, ponds, pools
- Accessory apartments
- Projects that increase sewage flow (i.e. new bedrooms)
- Projects that increase the gross floor area
- Changes in driveway locations
- Major grading
- Facade alterations if in the Stowe Historic District (SHOD)
- Projects in the Ridge Hillside Overlay District (RHOD)
- Fences and walls in SHOD

A zoning permit is not required for:

- Accessory buildings under 100 sq. ft. and less than 10 ft. in height so long as they are not located in a required front yard and at least 5 ft. from any property line. Limited to two per side or rear yard.
- Interior renovations that do not increase the gross floor area and do not add bedrooms
- Patios at grade level
- General maintenance such as painting and roofing, unless in the RHOD

An applicant should always check with the zoning office if there are any questions.

Is a site plan required?

A site plan is required for any development involving new buildings, building additions, driveway changes, parking lot changes, construction or enlargement of steps, decks, patios, porches, or pools. The level of detail required for a site plan relates to the type of project proposed. Smaller projects, such as a house addition or construction of a deck or shed, do not necessarily need all of the items

below depending upon the individual project or site. A more involved project requires a site plan that includes:

- Name of the project, current owners' name and address, and tax parcel number for the property
- Name of firm or individual preparing plan, scale, north point and date of preparation
- Existing and proposed features in sufficient detail to allow the Zoning Administrator to determine compliance with regulations
- Zoning setback lines
- All distinct and/or prominent physical features, (existing or proposed), such as tree lines, stone walls, ledge outcroppings, watercourses, water supplies, wastewater areas or sewer lines areas, or items of historical or cultural significance
- Elevations to show compliance with height restrictions
- Floor plans for additions and new construction

How do I determine my property boundaries?

Determining your property boundaries can be difficult. With many projects the tax map boundaries are accurate enough to obtain the required permits. In other cases, more accurate property locations are needed.

In these cases, survey-quality mapping of a property may be needed to obtain approvals for a project or for the actual development of the project. Sources of survey-quality mapping may be available from:

- Your own records
- The Town Clerk's office if a survey was recorded
- The Town Clerk's office if a subdivision was recorded that showed the location of buildings existing at the time of the subdivision
- The Zoning Office if a previous permit was on file that used a survey

Occasionally, property boundaries can be determined in the field from existing survey pins or monuments. Property owners should be cautious of using pins or monuments to determine boundaries unless they know for certain that they indicate boundaries. Not all survey pins indicate a property boundary and pins may have been moved.

Unfortunately, an applicant may sometimes need to obtain a survey in order to proceed with a project, which can be costly. A survey completed by a registered surveyor is almost always the best source of property boundary information. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain accurate property boundary information needed to complete a project.

Can I build as soon as I obtain a permit?

State law requires a 15-day appeal period after the permit is approved before construction can begin. In addition, you need to make certain that any other required permits from the State of Vermont are obtained.

What if I have on-site wastewater (septic) disposal?

As of July 1, 2007, the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation has jurisdiction over all on-site wastewater disposal systems. Any construction involving additional bedrooms will need a new or updated wastewater approval from the state. Although not required for a zoning permit, it is advisable to seek any required wastewater approvals in conjunction with zoning approvals since the wastewater design could affect your final building layout.

What if I don't obtain a permit?

If a project is done without obtaining the proper permits, the property owner and/or applicant may:

- Be required to do costly repairs to gain compliance
- Need to remove work done that was not in compliance
- Pay increased permit application fees
- Be involved in legal action to gain compliance
- Have difficulties with obtaining a clear title when selling a property

Stowe Historic District (SHOD) Review

Many properties in the village are within the Stowe Historic District Overlay District (SHOD). Most alterations and construction, except general maintenance, within the SHOD require a review of the architectural aspects of the development to make certain it preserves the existing historic and architectural integrity of the area. SHOD review is also required for historic properties outside of the SHOD. In addition to the normal review and approval of the application by the Zoning Administrator, the application is required to be presented to the Stowe Historic Preservation Committee (SHC). They will review the project, make suggestions regarding any changes, and then make a formal recommendation to the Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB will review the SHC recommendation and make a final decision. A zoning permit can only be approved if the DRB approves the SHOD review. The complete approval process can take approximately 4-8 weeks. The Zoning Administrator can advise the applicant on how to best prepare for this review.

Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD) Review

The Ridgeline and Hillside Overlay District (RHOD) includes properties located at higher elevations, steep slopes, and visually sensitive areas. In addition to the normal review and approval by the Zoning Administrator, the applicant is required to obtain Development Review Board (DRB) RHOD approval. The development is first classified as “minor” or “major” depending upon the visual impact. A visit to the site by the Zoning Administrator helps the DRB establish this determination. Photos of the area are also useful for the DRB review. “Minor” projects require little or no additional information to be approved. “Major” projects require a more significant visual analysis and additional materials. The “minor” development approval process can take approximately 4-8 weeks. The “major” development approval can require additional time. The Zoning Administrator can advise the applicant on how to best prepare for this review.

Do I need any other permits?

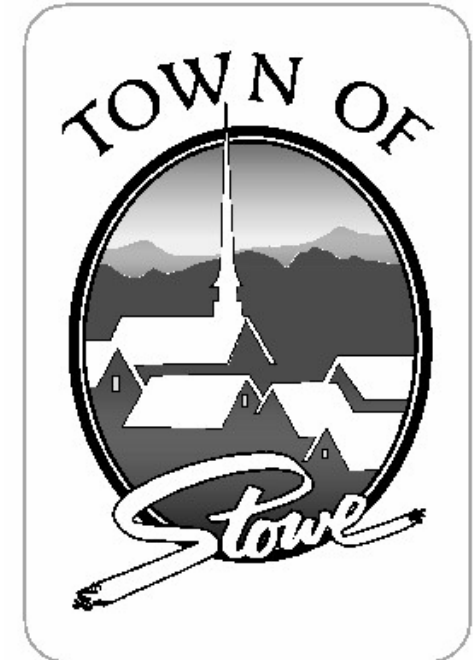
The State of Vermont, Department of Public Safety, Fire Safety Division requires a building permit for all construction involving public buildings (which includes residential rentals). Other state permits may be required for certain projects including driveway curb cuts for state highways, wastewater permits, and general construction permits (if over one acre is disturbed). Information on state permits can be obtained at www.state.us/labind or by calling 802-479-4434.

The Town of Stowe, Director of Public Works issues permits for driveway curb cuts for local roads and wastewater and water connection permits to connect into the municipal wastewater and/or water systems.

Need help?

The Stowe Zoning Department will assist you with your development approvals. Assistance includes review of existing property zoning records, review of applicable regulations, and guidance regarding other approvals that may need to be obtained. A preliminary project review is available and can save time and costs before proceeding with final design work. The Stowe Zoning Ordinance and Development Application are available at the Zoning Office and at www.TownofStoweVt.org.

Obtaining a Zoning Permit for Residential Development? (Including rentals)



Stowe Zoning Office
P.O. Box 216
Stowe, VT 05672
802 / 253-6130