

# Home Owners' Frequently Asked Questions

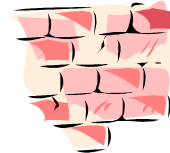
City of Sparks  
 PermitServices@CityofSparks.us  
 CityWorks Division  
 1675 East Prater Way, Suite 107  
 Sparks, NV 89434



My neighbor says I need a building permit to put up my fence. Do I?

Yes. A permit is required before installing any fence. The Planning Division will review your site plan to determine if the location of the fence meets the requirements of the zoning district where you live. Any fence 6' or taller requires a building permit. You'll need to submit a site plan showing the fence location and a drawing showing the structure details of the proposed fence.

Does my little retaining wall need to be reviewed and permitted prior to construction?



Yes and no. Retaining walls over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall and retaining walls of any height that are supporting a surcharge require a permit. Retaining walls which are not over 4 feet in height and are not supporting a surcharge do not require permits. A surcharge is any additional load at a higher elevation than the top of the wall whether temporary or permanent. Most retaining walls requiring a permit need to be designed by a Nevada licensed engineer and stamped plans need to be submitted for review.

Why does an engineer have to design and stamp my plans? It's only a little wall.

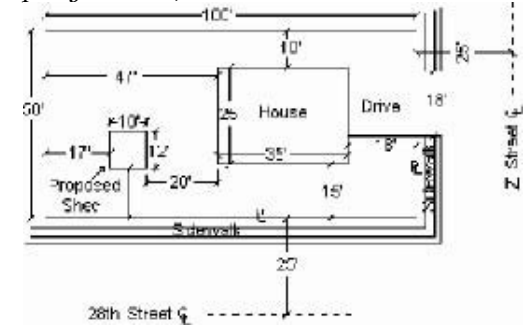
This area has unique soil conditions that can vary area by area (even lot-to-lot!) making it impossible to determine globally the construction criteria needed for safe installation. A Nevada licensed engineer is aware of the conditions affecting your lot and can design your structure accordingly.

What's a site plan? What needs to be on it and what does "to-scale" mean? What information is needed on my site plan?

A site plan is a 'to-scale' drawing that shows an overhead view of your lot indicating existing and proposed structures. "To scale" means using a unit of

measure that allows you to shrink your drawing to fit on a

regular 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper. The basic information required for a site plan includes the lot and structure dimensions, the distance from the property line to the structures, the distance from the centerline of the street to the property line, the property address, north arrow and scale size.



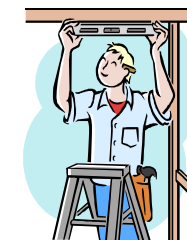
\*Example only - not to scale

I've hired a contractor to build an additional bedroom and he insists on putting a smoke detector in every bedroom and in every hallway. Is this really necessary?

The Code requires that smoke detectors in new construction be hard-wired with battery backup and that they be installed in every bedroom and the hallways leading to every bedroom. In houses constructed prior to this requirement, battery powered smoke detectors must be installed in these same areas when upgrades valued at over \$1000 are made.. Remember: Check your batteries regularly!

I need a place to put my lawn mower, edger, and tools. The salesman at the store says I don't need a permit for a pre-fabricated storage shed?

Most small sheds will fall under the exemptions for permits, however, setbacks and other criteria may still apply. Contact CityWorks before you buy.



Can I put up a patio cover?

Depending on your location and plans, you may be allowed to cover your patio after you obtain the necessary permit approval. Call CityWorks for more information and permit details

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### Building Division

Phone: 775 353-2306  
Fax: 775 353-2370

### Planning Division

Phone: 775 353-2340  
Fax: 775 353-1608

### Engineering

Phone: 775 353-2340  
Fax: 775 353-7874

### Public Works

Phone: 775 353-2300

### Environmental Control

Phone: 775 861-4152

### Washoe County Air Quality

Phone: 775 784-7200

### City Clerks Office

Phone: 775 353-2350

### Business License

Phone: 775 353-2360

### Police Department (Non-Emergency)

Phone: 775 353-2248

### Fire Department (Non-Emergency)

Phone: 775 353-2266

### Nevada State Contractors' Board

Phone: 775 688-1141  
Fax: 775 688-1271

### Department of Consumer Affairs

Phone: 775 688-1800

### Truckee Meadows Wtr Authority (TMWA)

Phone: 775 834-8029

### Washoe County Health Department

Phone: 775 328-2434

### Better Business Bureau

Phone: 775 322-0657

### Regional Building Departments

Washoe County 775 328-2020  
Reno 775 334-2063

Can you tell me what rules, regulations and codes I need to know before I start my project?



*Depending on the circumstances, there are any number of rules and regulations that need to be followed. The City of Sparks has adopted the Uniform Building, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes as well as the National Electrical Code in all or part.*

*Check out the Sparks Municipal Code Section 15 for adopted building codes and amendments. The entire City of Sparks Municipal Code is available online at [www.cityofsparks.us](http://www.cityofsparks.us) or at the City Clerks office at City Hall.*

How long will it take to get my permit once I submit my application?

*Depending on your request, your permit could be issued in as little as 24 hours. Permits for small jobs such as walls, fences, and patio covers can usually be issued in about 24 hours. Permits requiring more extensive review such as for additions or outbuildings can usually be approved in a couple of weeks. Brand new home construction plan review usually takes three to four weeks.*

What if I want to have some electrical outlets installed with my patio cover or outbuilding? Do I have to hire a contractor?

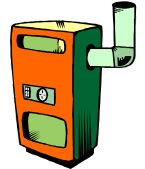
*CityWorks can issue you one permit to cover both the construction and the electrical work and you may do the work yourself for an owner-occupied residence. Again, make sure you understand the Code requirements before starting any project.*



When I bought my house, I thought I wouldn't need an air conditioner, but now I want one. The duct work is already there. Do I need to get a permit to install the air conditioning unit?

*A permit is required prior to installing or modifying all mechanical equipment.*

Do I have to hire a contractor to put in or replace a furnace or air conditioning system?



*Not necessarily. The Code allows an owner to do most of the work on the property they own and live in. It is always recommended that professionals be hired if the scope of the work exceeds your ability or skill level.*

We bought our home with an unfinished basement. Can we just add some sheetrock without a permit?



*Changes/alterations to unfinished space requires plan review, permits, and inspection to verify that Code*

I've decided to cover my concrete patio with a wooden deck. Anything I need to know about that?

*Absolutely! Depending on the height, location, and materials, permit approval may be required. All decks more than 30" above grade at any point, require plan review and approval per the City's adopted building code. Your homeowners' association may also have design standards that need to be followed so be sure to check with them before proceeding with your plans.*