

work permits

The proper permit application may depend upon whether the work will change the property's use, egress or occupancy.

The majority of construction requires a Department of Buildings permit. Most often, a New York State licensed professional engineer (PE) or Registered Architect (RA) must file plans and pull permits before work begins.

Work Permits + Applications

There are many permit types, such as construction, boiler, elevator and plumbing. The primary permit applications are: New Building (NB) and Alterations Type-1, 2 and 3:

- NB: Construction of new structures
- ALT1: Major alterations that will change use, egress or occupancy
- ALT2: Multiple types of work, not affecting use, egress or occupancy
- ALT3: One type of minor work, not affecting use, egress or occupancy.

Hiring an Architect or Engineer

A PE or RA is required to prepare construction drawings and submit applications (except ALT3s). In limited cases, professionals may self-certify that their applications comply with applicable codes and laws.

Hiring a Contractor

The Department issues licenses, registrations and certifications to prevent unqualified people from putting New Yorkers at risk. The License Search program at nyc.gov/buildings provides information on licenses, registrations and certifications. Other City agencies also have licensing requirements. For example, home improvement contractors must have a Department of Consumer Affairs license, which you can check at nyc.gov/consumers.

Minor Alterations Without Permits

Some minor work does not require a permit; a PE, RA or Department borough office manager can explain the exceptions. For example, installing new kitchen cabinets doesn't require a permit but contractors must have a DCA home improvement contractor license.

Filing + Records Management Fees

A PE, RA or contractor can estimate these fees.

Plan Examiner Review + Approval

Plan approval time depends upon the project's complexity and the issues — or objections — to be resolved.

Pulling Permits + Permit Duration

Once the application is approved, the applicant or contractor may pull work permits by submitting the required documents and paying the associated fees.

Final Inspections + Certificates of Occupancy

The Department must inspect completed work, but in some cases the PE or RA may self-certify its compliance with all applicable laws and codes. New Building or ALT1 applications must have a new or amended Certificate of Occupancy — or CO — describing the property's legal use and occupancy. The Department issues a Letter of Completion for ALT2 and ALT3 applications.

SNAPSHOT: Permits + Your Project

- 1 Determine the necessary permits, then file applications and construction drawings.
- 2 Obtain Department plan approval.
- 3 File and pull permits.
- 4 Perform approved work.
- 5 Pass the final inspections.
- 6 Receive a new or amended Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Completion.