



A GUIDE TO BUILDING



PLANNING

This is a fact-finding stage. If your plan is to construct a new home or addition to your home, such as a second story, a garage, deck, patio cover or similar project, your first step is to call the Thomas Township Building Department at 989-781-0150. Find out what the zoning setbacks are, maximum allowable height of a structure and maximum lot coverage before you start on construction drawings. In the beginning, the only document you need to bring to the Building Department is a site plan of your lot. Indicate to scale on the site plan where you plan to build, showing all setbacks. Include existing and proposed ponds, easements, and buildings. Everything must be labeled on the site plan.



COVENANTS

If you live in a covenant controlled subdivision, you should make contact with your association president to find out if you have anymore strict regulations in your subdivision. Thomas Township does not enforce subdivision covenants but you must be aware of them for proper planning.

WELL AND SEPTIC

Well and septic locations should be preplanned. Contact the Saginaw County Environmental Health Department if you have questions. If you need a well or septic on your parcel, a copy of the permit for each will be required and will be reviewed by the Building Inspector.

TALK TO THE BUILDING INSPECTOR

If you have questions, visit with the Building Inspector so you can understand the building code requirements and the process of submitting construction documents for a building permit. If you decide to use an architect, or if it is required based on the building code requirements, he/she should also contact the Building Department to confirm which codes are enforced by the Township.

WHAT IS NEEDED WHEN I APPLY FOR A BUILDING PERMIT?

Submittal requirements will vary depending on the proposed project.

For a water heater, electric service upgrade, re-roofing, furnace, air conditioning unit or similar project, the only requirement is the application for a permit and an explanation of what is being proposed.

For a deck, shed or attached or detached garage, patio cover, or similar project, two sets of the site plans and framing plans are required. A brochure may be available at the Building Department to assist you with a plan or you can go to our web page at www.thomastwp.org for assistance. See the Building Inspector if your project is not covered in a brochure.

NEW HOMES

For a new home, two sets of the site plan, the foundation design, the framing plan, the soils report (if needed) and two sets of architectural drawings (if needed) are required. During your meeting with the Building Department, it will be explained what information is required on the architectural drawings. If you are not using an architect or designer, you should submit a complete set of drawings showing the foundation, framing, roofing, electrical, plumbing and mechanical plan, as well as fire alarm/detector, and insulation plans.

You will also be required to show compliance with the Michigan Energy Code for the new structure.

If you have questions about your application or process see the building department for assistance.



FAQ'S

WHEN DO I NEED AN ARCHITECT OR A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER?

An architect is not required for a residential project in most cases if the home is under 3,500 square feet in size; however, if your plan is for a major project such as an addition, adding a second floor or building an entirely new home, an architect can be very helpful. An architect will be familiar with building code requirements and can assist with the design, which can include the floor plan, the exterior wall coverings and the interior finishes.

DOES A CONTRACTOR NEED A LICENSE?

The State of Michigan has licensing requirements for contractors. For a new structure or addition, the building, plumbing, electrical and heating contractors have to be licensed by the State of Michigan. The contractors must prove knowledge of the codes by testing for the license. They are also required to carry liability and worker's compensation insurance. A homeowner may be the contractor and pull permits if doing all of the work (see below).

CAN A HOMEOWNER PULL A BUILDING PERMIT?

Homeowners can pull a permit only if they are going to do the work. You can talk with the Building Inspector for more details. Some exceptions apply so do your homework and ask.

WHAT BUILDING CODES ARE ENFORCED IN THOMAS TOWNSHIP?

The State of Michigan adopts the codes that Thomas Township inspectors enforce. Contact the Building Inspector for the latest code adoption. You will need to know what Residential Code, Plumbing Code, Mechanical Code, Energy Code, and what Electrical Code is currently enforced.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET A BUILDING PERMIT?

Over the counter permits for minor electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work are usually issued the same day. Permits that require Building Inspector approval or plan review will take longer. If everything is in order when submitted, up to seven business days should be expected. If the inspector needs additional information, expect some delays.

DOES A PERMIT EVER EXPIRE?

A building permit expires in 180 days if the project has not begun. A permit will also expire if there is a lapse of 180 days between inspections. If there are circumstances beyond your control, the Building Official may grant an extension, but you must make contact with the Building Official prior to the 180 days lapse. A good idea is to mark your calendar with this information.

WHAT IS THE COST OF A BUILDING PERMIT?

The cost of the permit is based on the valuation of the work. The valuation is established by the estimated cost of the project derived by the Building Inspector using a square foot equivalent cost. Besides the building permit fee, if your project also includes plumbing, heating and electrical work, a separate fee is charged for each trade. The fees also include a plan review fee, and you will be required to pay for both water and sewer connections at the Water and Sewer Department if you plan to connect to them. Please call the Water and Sewer Department for cost at 989-781-0150.

If you're having problems calculating the fee, contact the building department at 989-781-0150 and get an estimated cost from the Building Inspector.



HOW ABOUT INSPECTIONS?

Inspections are performed the next business day after calling in a request. If you want an inspection on Wednesday, call for that inspection on Tuesday; the inspection request line is 989-781-0150, ask for the Building Department to schedule an inspection for Building. On the Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical Permits, you will be given a phone number to call for inspections at the top of the permit. Again, call 24 hours in advance of a needed inspection. You must provide the permit number, address and the type of inspection you are requesting. The required inspections for your project are sequentially marked on the inspection card that will be given to you when you're building permit is issued. Inspections are requested when different phases of construction are completed. For example, if you are requesting a rough plumbing inspection, all the piping for the waste and vents, water pipe and gas piping must be installed and tested. The rough plumbing, rough electric and rough heating must be inspected and approved before a rough framing inspection is requested.



WILL I HAVE THE SAME BUILDING INSPECTOR?

Usually you will. We have separate inspectors for heating, plumbing, electrical and framing.

CAN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR AN INSPECTION AND HOW LONG DOES AN INSPECTION TAKE?

Yes, you can make an appointment. For homeowners, we normally can give you an hour window when we will arrive. Most

WHERE DO I GET HELP?

Call the Thomas Township Building Department at 989-781-0150 during business hours, and between 8:00 am to about 9:00 am if you would like to talk with the Building Inspector. If your question concerns zoning, the Code Enforcement Officer can be reached at 989-781-0150 during business hours.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

WATER & SEWER

Thomas Township Offices
(989) 781-0150

DRIVEWAYS/ADDRESS

Saginaw Co. Road Commission
(989) 752-6140

If Driveway access is to M-46 or M-52 contact
MDOT

(989) 671-1555

SEPTIC/WELL PERMITS

Saginaw Co. Environmental Health Department
(989) 758-3800

SOIL EROSION PERMITS

Saginaw County Department of Public Works
(989) 790-5258

IF PROPERTY IS IN THE FLOODPLAIN

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
(989) 686-8025 Ext.8364

