



Building Department

Building Permitting Procedures Handbook

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Monday- Friday

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Building, Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, Gas and Fire Prevention

“Protecting the public’s life, health and welfare in the built environment”

The Building Department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the International Building, Plumbing, gas, Mechanical and Fire Prevention Codes as well as the International Residential Code and the National Electrical Code. The purpose of adopting these technical codes is to enhance public safety, health and general welfare through structural strength, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the built environment including alteration, repair, removal, demolition, use and occupancy of buildings, structures or premises and by regulating the installation and maintenance of all electrical, gas, mechanical and plumbing systems, which may be referred to as service systems.

Any request for and subsequent approval to construct any structure within the City of Gulf Shores or it’s police Jurisdiction requires that certain drawings, specifications, documents or other items be submitted to this department for review. The required submittals will vary depending on the size and nature of the project, the location and the relative complexity.

In addition to the Building Department, commercial, multifamily and industrial projects may need to be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning staff as well as the Public Works Department. As a general rule, these types of projects require zoning review only when they are located inside the city limits but must be reviewed by the Public Works Department whether they are located within the city limits or in the statutory police jurisdiction. In addition, should your project require the approval of a regulatory agency or entity other than the City of Gulf Shores, it is your responsibility to obtain that approval prior to submission of plans for review by us.

The material contained in this package is intended to provide comprehensive information for your use in determining what you will be required to submit to this department as well as a reference guide for use during the course of your construction project. While it is not possible for every issue to be addressed or every question answered, we do feel that the information contained herein will benefit you as your work progresses.

We encourage you to work closely with the staff of the Building Department for the duration of your project to ensure a smooth progression of work and to avoid delays and expenses that could have otherwise been resolved through effective communication.

Procedures for Obtaining Building Permits

Any owner, authorized agent or contractor who desires to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, alter repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the technical codes shall first make application to the Building Department in order to obtain the required permit for the work. Applicants for permits must be contractors licensed to do business in the City of Gulf Shores or owners of the property when acting as their own contractor and providing the supervision themselves. Each application for a permit, with the required fee, shall be filed with the Building Department on a form provided for that purpose and shall contain a description of the proposed work consistent with the requirements of the adopted codes.

Adopted Codes

2021 International Building Code
2018 International Plumbing Code
2021 International Mechanical Code
2021 International Fire Prevention Code
2021 International Gas Code
2021 International Residential code
2020 National Electrical Code

Categories of Permits

- Miscellaneous
- Additions and Accessory Buildings
- Single Family and Duplex Dwelling Units
- Commercial, Multifamily and Industrial new construction
- Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)
- Contiguous to Navigable Waters
- Demolition
- Hauling
- Mobile Home
- Moving

Miscellaneous Permits

A miscellaneous permit is a permit that would apply to fences, siding replacement, roofing, repair or replacement of building components, general renovation, swimming pools and similar types of work. In order to obtain a building permit for any of these types of work, the following must be submitted for approval:

- A. A completed Building Permit Application along with any necessary attachments that fully describes the nature of the proposed work.
- B. A current City of Gulf Shores business license (unless you are the property owner acting as your own contractor).
- C. For swimming pools, a stamped "As- Built" survey showing the location of all existing structures and the pool drawn to scale in relation to the property boundaries. (If you are a homeowner acting as your own contractor, you will be required to sign the Homebuilders Licensure exemption form.)

Permits for Residential Additions, Accessory Buildings, Etc.

The requirements that must be met in order to receive a building permit to construct an accessory building are similar to those for the construction of a residential home. The primary difference being that a principle structure is usually existing on the lot (if within the corporate limits, a principal structure **MUST** be pre-existing on the property). The following must be submitted and approved prior to the issuance of a building permit.

- A. A completed Building Permit Application along with any necessary attachments that fully describes the nature of the proposed work.
- B. A current City of Gulf Shores business license (unless you are the property owner acting as your own contractor).
- C. A stamped "As- Built" survey showing the location of all existing structures and the location of the proposed accessory structure drawn to scale in relation to the property boundaries.
- D. A Footing or foundation plan
- E. Floor Plan
- F. Detailed wall section drawing

All plans must be submitted on paper and in a PDF format.

Permits to Construct a Single Family Dwelling or Duplex

In order to receive a permit to construct a Single Family or Duplex Dwelling Unit, the following documents and or drawings must be submitted and approved:

- A. A completed Building Permit Application.
- B. A current City of Gulf Shores business license and valid State of Alabama Home Builders License (unless you are the property owner acting as your own contractor).
- C. A stamped surveyed plot plan showing the location of all proposed structures drawn to scale in relation to the property boundaries.
- D. 1 complete set of plans on paper and 1 in PDF format that include a footing or foundation plan. A framing plan indicating at a minimum the framing material size, species, spacing of partitions, joists (both ceiling and floor) and rafters, a layout of all mechanical, electrical and plumbing and at least one typical wall section, drawn from the bottom of the footing to the top of the roof, in sufficient detail to fully describe the construction.
- E. A receipt for the payment of water and sewer service, or if sewer is not available, a release from the Baldwin County Health Department for a private sewage disposal system.
- F. A driveway turnout permit
- G. Residential Energy Efficiency Check (RESCHECK)
- H. Any paperwork specific to certain flood zones, Beach mouse habitats, Archeological sites or Gulf fronting properties
- I. Check for plan review fee equal to \$1/1000 of the calculated valuation of the structure.

Permits to construct a commercial, multifamily or industrial structure:

The requirements which must be met in order to receive a permit for this type of work are considerably more detailed than those for the preceding types of projects. Departments other than the Building Department must review your plans to ensure that the approved sight plan is complied with. This information package does not attempt to detail the requirements of other departments. Information regarding the

requirements for initiating a new site plan may be obtained in the Planning and Zoning Department. In addition to the Planning and zoning, there are site drainage standards which must be met and will be reviewed by the Public Works Department. This department will not issue building or other trade permits for any type of construction until the planning and zoning department and the public works departments have approved the project. In addition to the aforementioned, the following documents and or drawings must be submitted and approved in order to obtain a building permit for construction in this category.

- Site plan approval
- Check for the plan review fee equal to 1% of the calculated valuation of the project.
- A valid Alabama General Contractors License (for any job greater than \$50,000.00). If you have questions about the licensure requirement, please contact the building department.
- A detailed footing and foundation plan showing sizes and locations of all concrete footings showing size, type and location of all reinforcing used. All concrete slab information and details showing subgrade material, reinforcing, thickness of slab, type of concrete, and any related information as may be required.
- A floor plan for each different level of a structure showing all room or area identification of each, dimensions of each room or area, overall structure dimensions, location of all doors and windows, fire resistance ratings of all walls and partitions and any other information unique to the floor plan.
- A window and door schedule showing overall sizes (width and height), finish frame, type hardware and glazing information of all doors and window used in the structure.
- A room finish schedule showing all floor, wall and ceiling information including flame spread ratings.
- Any and all necessary wall sections, drawn from the bottom of the wall to the top of the roof, showing all materials used and all required dimensions to fully describe the drawing.
- Any other drawing and or details which fully describe the fire resistance rating of the floors, walls, ceilings and roof structures including the design number designations such as UL, FM or SBCCI, PST-ESI. Additionally, applicable through penetration firestop systems must be shown.

- Drawings and calculations necessary to fully describe the entire electrical system. This includes service size, subpanel size, service conductor sizes, sub panel conductor size, branch circuit size, temperature rating of all conductors, temperature rating of all terminals, load calculations for the entire structure including necessary consideration of voltage drop, riser diagram and any other information deemed necessary.
- Drawings and calculations necessary to fully describe the entire plumbing system. This includes pipe sizes, materials, demand requirements etc. for the structure drainage system and the water distribution system. Drawings should depict the location of all fixtures in the structure or on the premises.
- Drawings and calculations (to include Manual J) necessary to fully describe the entire mechanical system. This includes locations of all ducts, plenums and similar types of installations. The location of all mechanical equipment should be depicted.
- Drawings and calculations which fully describe the fire alarm, automatic sprinkler, standpipe and hood fire suppression systems or any other systems required to be installed.
- Any paperwork specific to certain flood zones, Beach mouse habitats, Archeological sites or Gulf fronting properties.

**In the event that an architect or engineer is required to design a project, it is the policy of this department to require that particular design professional to certify the structure and its elements prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. **

** The State of Alabama Building Commission must review State buildings, motion picture theatres, hotels or motels which provide 15 or more sleeping units and all schools. **

Any requirements necessary for the strength, stability or proper operation of an existing or proposed building structure, electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, or for the public safety, health and general welfare not specifically covered by this or the other technical codes, shall be determined by the Chief Building Official. The Chief Building Official may require details, computations, stress diagrams or other data necessary to describe the construction or installation and the basis of the calculations. All drawings, specifications and accompanying data required by the Chief Building Official shall be prepared by an architect or engineer and shall be affixed with their official seal.

Permits to construct in a Special Flood Hazard Area

In addition to the specific requirements which must be met based on the nature of work being performed, there are also considerable construction criteria that apply to projects taking place within the identified Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) in the City of Gulf Shores and its Police Jurisdiction. The flood hazard areas are subject to periodic inundation which results in loss of life and property, health and safety hazards, disruption of commerce and governmental services, extraordinary public expenditures for flood relief and protection and impairment of the tax base, all of which adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.

These flood losses are caused by occupancy in flood hazard areas or uses vulnerable to floods, which are inadequately elevated, flood-proofed or otherwise unprotected from flood damages and by the cumulative effect of obstructions in flood plains causing increases in flood heights and velocities.

In order to receive a permit for construction within the identified SFHA, the following must be submitted and approved:

- A temporary benchmark (TBM) survey indicating the average elevation of the existing grade, the flood zone the proposed structure lies within. The required elevation above mean sea level and the type and location of the reference monument. This survey gives the builder the exact information needed to ensure that the foundation is properly elevated.
- If the structure is located in a V or VE flood zone, a certification form the engineer or architect of record certifying that the structure has been designed in accordance with Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements will be required.

Once construction has commenced, you will be required to provide an Under Construction Elevation certificate before any vertical construction as well as an "As-Built" Survey and a Finished Construction Elevation Certificate once all the machinery has been set on the structure.

Permits to construct on gulf fronting lots

The City of Gulf Shores is delegated by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to administer permits, regulatory and enforcement functions of the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP). If your construction project is located on a lot that is intersected by the Coastal Construction Line (CCL) you will be required to obtain a permit or consistency determination from this department that assesses whether or not the use is consistent with the applicable provisions of the City Ordinance and Administrative Code 335-8.

In addition to specific requirements which must be met based on the nature of the work being performed, the following must be submitted and approved:

- A. A boundary survey stamped by a licensed surveyor showing the location of any existing structures , improvements, actual dimensions of the property, location and dimensions of any proposed additions and the location of the CCL with monument numbers.
- B. One set of complete construction drawings
- C. Check for \$1,100.00 for residential advertisement or \$14,000.00 for commercial advertisement.
- D. Completed building permit application

Permits to construct contiguous to navigable waters

Any request for a permit to construct a new bulkhead, retaining wall, wharf, pier, boathouse or any similar type structure requires the approval of the Corps of Engineers and Alabama State Lands prior to this department issuing a building permit. The information required by the Corps in order to make application for these types of permits can be obtained directly from them at the phone number listed at the end of this booklet.

In certain cases, a permit can be issued directly by this department without having to first make application to the Corps. These permits known as National General Permits are considered when there is an existing structure located on the property and modifications are requested to the existing structure. These are evaluated on a case by case basis to determine the applicability of the National Permit.

In situations where wetlands are expected to be impacted on a parcel, a Corps permit is required prior to this department issuing any type of building permit. Once again, specific questions relative to the rules and regulations as well as different scenarios which may or may not be acceptable should be asked directly to the Corps of Engineers.

Demolition Permit

A demolition permit is required for the razing of any structure within the City limits or the Police Jurisdiction. Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit, a demolition application must be signed by all the utility companies stating that they have capped off or removed service and it is safe to demolish.

Hauling Permit

A permit to haul any fill material shall be required if the material is going anywhere south of Highway 180 on the West side of Highway 59 S., any land located North of State Highway 180 West of the Peninsula subdivision and any land located South of County Road 2 on the East side of Highway 59 S. A sample of the material you are hauling should be provided with your application for verification of the absence of staining materials.

Mobile Home Permit

A mobile home installation permit is required prior to the setting of any mobile home. Verification of the water and sewer service provided (or Baldwin County Septic Permit) must be provided at the time of application. The setting of a mobile home must be done by an installer licensed by the Alabama Manufactured Housing Commission and the City of Gulf Shores. The mobile home must be set in accordance with the minimum standards established by the Commission. Any mobile home moved into our jurisdiction must be a "Zone II" unit. The following must be submitted and approved:

- A. Completed Building Permit Application
- B. Stamped surveyed plot plan

** Note: An "As-Built" survey will be required before any electrical power is authorized**

Trade Permits

Separate permits are required for plumbing, electrical, mechanical and gas work. The building permit is not "ALL INCLUSIVE". These permits can be obtained from the Building Department.

Conditions of a permit

A permit issued shall be construed as a license to proceed with the work and NOT as authority to violate, cancel or set aside any of the provisions of the technical codes, nor shall the issuance of any permit prevent Building Department from thereafter requiring a correction of errors in plans, construction or violations of any code adopted by The City of Gulf Shores.

Inspections

Upon request from the permit holder or his agent, the Building Department shall make the following inspections and such other inspections as necessary. The Building Department will notify the permit holder or his agent of the permission to proceed or any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the currently adopted codes. The minimum required inspections are:

- Underground (Plumbing under slab wet test, electrical, etc.)
- Foundation (the property lines must be clearly identified at time of inspection. A survey will be required at this point to verify setbacks have been met.)
- Floor System (for houses built on piers or crawlspaces).
- Rough (4-way to include building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical).
- Sewer if necessary
- Temporary to Permanent Power (Safety release form must be signed and the contractor's sub-list must be turned in in order to schedule this inspection).
- Final (4-way to include building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical).
- Fire inspections shall be conducted by the Fire Marshall 251-968-4292
- Planning and Zoning and Public Works will also have to conduct final inspections on any Commercial, Industrial and Multifamily projects.

Building

1. Foundation Inspection: to be made after trenches are excavated and form erected and all reinforcing, vapor barriers and termite prevention methods are completed.

2. Framing Inspection: to be made after the roof, all framing, fire blocking and bracing is in place, all concealed wiring, pipes, chimneys, ducts and vents are complete.
3. Strapping
4. Final Inspection: to be made after the building is completed and ready for occupancy.

Electrical

1. Underground Inspection: to be made after trenches are excavated, conduit or cable installed and before any backfill is put in place.
2. Rough Inspection: to be made after the roof, all framing, fire blocking and bracing is in place, and prior to the installation of wall or ceiling membranes.
3. Temporary to Permanent power: to be made after all fixtures and over current devices are installed and all wiring is completely safe and ready for connection to power supply
4. Final Inspection: to be made after the building is completed, all required fixtures are in place and properly connected or protected and the structure is ready for occupancy.

Plumbing

1. Underground Inspection: to be made after trenches are excavated, piping is installed and before any backfill is put in place.
2. Rough Inspection: to be made after the roof, soil, water and vent piping is complete, and prior to the installation of wall or ceiling membranes.
3. Final Inspection: to be made after the building is completed, all required fixtures are in place and properly connected or protected and the structure is ready for occupancy.

Mechanical

1. Underground Inspection: to be made after trenches are excavated, conduit or cable installed and before any backfill is put in place.
2. Rough Inspection: to be made after the roof, all framing, fire blocking, duct work (including concealed components) and bracing are in place, and prior to the installation of wall or ceiling membranes.

3. Final Inspection: to be made after the building is completed, the mechanical system is in place and properly connected and the structure is ready for occupancy.

Gas

The City of Gulf Shores does not conduct gas inspections. These are done by Riviera Utilities who provides us with a copy. Please contact them at the phone number listed in the back of this handbook.

Safety Inspections

When the ownership or occupancy of an individual structure or tenant space changes and is part of the business license application process, this department will conduct a safety inspection of the premises to determine suitability for occupancy.

Work shall not be done on any part of a building, structure, electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system beyond the point indicated in each successive inspection without first obtaining a written release from any department necessary. Such written release shall be given only after an inspection has been made of each successive step in the construction or installation as indicated by each foregoing inspection type.

INSPECTIONS MUST BE SCHEDULED AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE.

Service Utilities

No person shall make connections from a utility, source of energy, fuel or power to any building or system which is regulated by the technical codes for which a permit is required until released by the Building Department.

During the stage of construction when it is time to connect electricity to the structure, you must request a Temporary to Permanent power inspection and submit the signed safety release form. This inspection should be requested prior to calling for any final inspections and only after all of the devices, fixture, over current devices and appliances are installed.

Certificates of Occupancy

Building Occupancy:

A new building shall not be occupied or any changes made in the occupancy, nature or use of a building or part of a building until the Chief Building Official has issued a Certificate of Occupancy.

Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy:

The requirements for a Certificate of Occupancy are as follows:

- Final inspections have been approved by the Building Department, Planning and Zoning, Public Works and the Fire Departments.
- As Built Plans must be provided in PDF format (commercial projects)
- Subcontractors list must be approved by the Revenue Department
- AIA form G704 Letter of Substantial Completion signed by all responsible parties (commercial projects)
- Copies of all “Third Party” inspections performed on structural elements or other components

Conditional Certificates of Occupancy:

In the event that there are minor items or issues which are not completed or are code deficient, this department may consider issuing a “Conditional” Certificate of Occupancy (CCO) upon request. The CCO allows the Permit holder to occupy the structure for its intended use while the deficiencies are addressed. The CCO is issued for a finite number of days. In order to obtain a CCO, the permit holder must sign an affidavit agreeing to the number of days and submitting a check for an amount sufficient enough to cover the term requested. For residential projects (single family or duplex) the CCO per day fee is \$50.00 while any commercial project is subject to a per day fee of \$100.00. There is a non-refundable administrative fee of 100.00 for a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy. After the conditions that form the basis of the CCO are completed within the allowed time, the city will refund all the money minus the \$ 100.00 administrative fee. Should the project still not pass final inspection and the time allotted has past, the City of Gulf Shores will keep the per day amount times the number of day over the allotted time.

General Construction Information

- During the course of construction, all debris shall be kept cleared by means of containers, dumpsters or enclosed fencing away from work areas, passage ways, stairs and any parking areas.
- Permitted projects must provide off street parking and storage areas for construction materials

- Disposal of waste material or debris by burning must comply with regulations promulgated by the City of Gulf Shores Fire Marshall.
- Sanitary toilet facilities shall be provided on each job site and properly maintained throughout the project.
- The set of plans approved and stamped by the Building Department must remain on the job site at all times during construction.
- Property boundaries must be delineated at the time of the foundation inspection and an "As-Built" survey provided prior to any vertical construction.
- All new and upgraded electrical services must be installed underground
- In certain hazardous locations, windows must be safety glazed. Generally, these are within a 24" radius of a door, within 60" of the drain of a bathtub and within 18" of a walking surface and in excess of 9 square feet. Consult a building inspector should the location and size of a window be questionable.
- Balconies, porches, decks or any other raised surface located more than 30" above the floor or grade shall have a guardrail not less than 36" high. Guardrails shall have intermediate picket spaces not to exceed 4".
- Handrails are required on any stairs that have 3 or more risers.
- The raceway between a grinder pump basin and its control panel shall be sealed off in an approved manner consistent with the provisions of the National Electrical Code NEC.
- Smoke detectors shall be installed in each sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms and on each additional story of the dwelling unit.
- Ranges and electric dryers must be wired with 4 conductors. Four prong plugs and receptacles are also required.
- Safety plans are required under mechanical units and water heaters except when located in a garage or other area which will not cause damage as ascertained by the Building Department.

Useful Contacts and Telephone Numbers

Gulf Shores Utilities.....	251-968-6323
Baldwin County Sewer.....	251-971-3022
Riviera Utilities.....	251-943-5001
Baldwin County Health Department.....	251-947-3618
Baldwin EMC.....	251-968-7585
Us Army Corps of Engineers.....	251-690-2511
US Fish and Wildlife.....	251-441-5181
Alabama State Lands.....	251-625-0814
Baldwin County Courthouse.....	251-943-5061