

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO PROCESS MY BUILDING PERMIT?

The County processes plan checks in the order they are received. The goal is to have an initial plan review done in 2 to 4 weeks from the date the application was submitted. Your project will be reviewed and requires approval by the Planning, Building and Environmental Health Departments prior to issuance. **NOTE:** some projects also require approval of outside agencies such as a Fire Department, or municipal services letters. Smaller projects such as kitchen or bathroom remodels and decks may be processed sooner as time allows. It should be noted that these time frames are for the initial plan check and may not represent how long it will take to obtain a permit.

I NEED TO CLOSE ESCROW/BUILD BEFORE IT RAINS ETC. CAN I BE MOVED TO THE FRONT OF THE PLAN-CHECK LINE?

The County plan check structure is based on the order the application was received – “first come, first served”. Provisions may be made for “foundation only” permits for commercial projects.

I DON'T HAVE ANY CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, SO WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY SCHOOL IMPACT FEES?

School Impact Fees are established by the local school district and are assessed on new residential and commercial construction projects for 500 square feet or more, regardless of whether or not there are any school-age children in the household. School fees for residential construction apply only to living spaces; garages and workshops are exempt.

WHERE CAN I GET A COPY OF THE CODE BOOKS?

Copies of the California Codes are available for review at the County. Copies can be purchased from the International Code Council at www.ICESAFE.org, or at

5360 S Workman Mill Rd, Whittier CA 90601, or by calling 1-888-422-7233. They can also be viewed online for free at www.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/codes

WHAT IS CLASS K?

Class K is an alternate construction standard available to owner-built rural dwellings and appurtenant structures intended “...to allow and facilitate the use of alternatives to the specifications prescribed by the California Building Code to the extent that a reasonable degree of health and safety is provided...” To qualify, the property must be appropriately zoned and be one acre or larger. The structure cannot exceed 2 ½ stories. The fee to process the permit is the same for a Class K or California Building Code structure (**NOTE:** Class K does **NOT** apply to commercial or industrial structures)

DOES THE COUNTY HAVE A GRADING ORDINANCE? DO I NEED TO OBTAIN A PERMIT TO GRADE MY PROPERTY?

Yes, Excavation and Grading is regulated by [Chapter 18.70](#) of the Mendocino County Code of Ordinances. A grading permit OR an exemption from a permit must be obtained. **NOTE:** Grading within the Coastal Zone may also be subject to a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).

WHY DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A SITE MAP WITH MY BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION?

All applications require that a site map be submitted. The information assists the County in determining setbacks, distances to other structures, septic tank and leach field locations, and other information necessary to evaluate the application for consistency with County Codes. The site map also provides a record of improvements for future owners/buyers/sellers.

DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR REROOFING?

Yes.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING BUILDING PERMITS



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WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS TYPICALLY DO NOT REQUIRE A BUILDING PERMIT?

Building:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (11.15 m²). It is permissible that these structures still be regulated by [Section 710A](#), despite exemption from permit.
2. Fences not over 7 feet (2134 mm) high.
3. Oil derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids.
5. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) and the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2:1.
6. Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) and are installed entirely above ground.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
12. Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
13. Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches (1753 mm) in height.

Electrical:

1. Repairs and maintenance: Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

2. Radio and television transmitting stations: The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions but do apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installations of towers and antennas.
3. Temporary testing systems: A permit shall not be required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

Gas:

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds (4.54 kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (0.75 kW) or less.

Plumbing:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work, and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
2. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided that such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

DO MY PLANS HAVE TO BE DRAWN BY AN ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER?

In general, State law requires that plans for commercial or industrial projects be drawn by a licensed engineer or architect. Other structures of a complex design or those

not conforming to the California Building Code definition of conventional construction may also require plans by a licensed engineer or architect. Refer to the Plan Requirement handout for the detail required in your submittal.

WHAT INFORMATION MUST I SUBMIT WITH MY PERMIT APPLICATION?

1. One set of plans in digital format
2. One copy of the site map*
3. One copy of engineering calculations (if applicable)*
4. One copy of California Energy Compliance (for conditioned space)*
5. One copy of CalFire 4290 Preliminary Clearance if located in a State Responsibility Area (prior to permit issuance)*

*May also be submitted digitally

WHY DO I NEED ENERGY CALCULATIONS AND WHERE DO I GET THOSE DONE?

Any conditioned space requires energy calculations. We cannot recommend anyone in particular, however, the website www.cheers.org can provide a list of energy consultants for your area

For more information, visit

www.mendocinocounty.gov/planning-building-services

