

Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

Housing Opportunity Fund

SMALL LANDLORD FUND

Building Permit Requirements

Updated: 01/13/20

Section A:

Commercial Permits

Commercial permits are required for all work performed on structures other than single or two-family dwellings. This includes multifamily buildings with three or more units and mixed-use buildings with residential units and commercial spaces. Please click on the appropriate link from the list of permits on our navigation bar to the right of this screen.

Standard Permit Application Requirement

A permit will not be issued to a licensed contractor if the insurance on file expires within 30 days.

Things to Know:

- Drawings must be specific for the permit.
- Mechanical, Electrical, Fire Alarm, and Sprinkler System drawings will not be accepted with a building permit submission.
- Separate applications must be made for each permit type, and the required drawings must accompany each application.
- See this [Bulletin](#) for additional information regarding standard application requirements.
- If project scope has been modified after a permit has been issued, an amended permit may be required. Please refer to the [Amended Permit Bulletin](#) for an outline of that process.
- Read our Construction [Permit Tips](#).
- All work performed under a commercial building permit must be completed by a [City licensed General Contractor](#). You can search for [City license holders in the OneStopPGH database](#).

Residential Building Permits

A residential building permit is required for the following work on a residential building or structure:

- Renovate and repair an existing single family or two-family dwelling.
- Construct an addition to an existing single family or two-family dwelling.
- Construct a new structure including a new single family or two-family dwelling or accessory structure.

Please see [Permit Home](#) for definition of residential structures and work type. Please see work not requiring a permit for work that can be performed without a PLI permit. [Please visit our Contacts page for Construction Inspector contact information.](#)

Accessory Structure

Accessory structures are smaller normally un-occupied structures that are associated with a single-family or two-family dwelling. Accessory structures include, but are not limited to, fences, pools, decks, sheds, garages, etc.

New Construction Work Type:

- **New Building Complete:** applies to the complete construction of a single-family or two-family dwelling under a single building permit.
- **New Building Phased:** applies to the construction of a single-family or two-family dwelling performed under separate permits for each phase.
 - For example: one phased permit is for the foundation and another phased permit is for the remaining construction.
 - Please note that permit holders proceed at their own risk with phased permits with no assurance that PLI will grant a permit for the entire structure.
- **Site Work:** applies to modifications to the site beyond those directly associated with the construction of the building. This would exclude excavation for the foundation.
- **Accessory Structure** – applies to the construction of accessory structures in association with the construction of new single-family or two-family dwelling.

Addition / Alteration Work Type:

- this applies to modifications of an existing structure which either increases the area or the volume of the building or structure.
- **Alterations – Exterior:** this applies to any modification to the exterior of the structure which are structural in nature or a part of a permit that includes structural work.
- **Alterations – Interior:** this applies to any modification to the interior of the structure which are structural in nature or a part of a permit that includes structural work.
- **Accessory Structure:** this applies to construction of a new accessory structure or modifications to an existing structure that is accessory to an existing single-family or two-family dwelling.

Minor Work Type:

- **Non-structural Renovations - Exterior:** applies to modifications to the exterior of the structure which are not structural in nature.
 - This would include, but is not limited to roofing, window or replacement in the same size and location, siding or exterior wall covering modifications.
- **Non-structural Renovations - Interior:** applies any modification to the interior of the structure which are structural in nature

Permit Process:

See these webpages for additional information regarding the permitting process:

- [Permit Process](#)
- [Application Submission](#)
 - All Work Types other than Minor Alterations require submission of drawings to OneStopPGH.
 - Please note that drawings prepared and sealed by a PA licensed architect may not be required for the following:
 - Single story accessory structures without an occupied roof.
 - Applies if the submitted drawings provide sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with prescriptive building code requirements.
 - Decks that are designed per the [Residential Deck Form](#) and comply with associated restrictions.
 - Pools that are designed per the [Residential Pool Form](#) and comply with associated restrictions.
 - Single story additions without an occupied roof.
 - Applies if the submitted drawings provide sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with prescriptive building code requirements.
 - The addition does not rely on the existing building for structural support.
- [Application Review](#)
- [Permit Issuance](#)
- [Permit Inspections](#)
- [Permit Completion](#)

Section B

WORK NOT REQUIRING A BUILDING PERMIT OR ZONING APPROVAL (ROZA – RECORD OF ZONING APPROVAL):

- One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouse and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet and they are accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling that are less than 24” deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above grade
- Chicken Coops
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling
- Retaining walls 4'-0" or less in height, measured from the lowest level of grade to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids.
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below grade and not part of an accessible route.
- Window awnings that are attached to a single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling or Group U occupancy structure, are supported by an exterior wall and do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall
- Movable cases, counters and partitions that are not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work. (Exterior painting on locally designated historic structures or structures in locally designated historic districts requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.)

WORK REQUIRING ZONING APPROVAL (ROZA) BUT NO BUILDING PERMIT:

- Fences 6 feet or less in height.
- Uncovered decks where the deck floor is 30 inches or less above grade and are accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling
- Carports (open on at least two sides), parking pads, and greenhouses accessory to a single-family or two-family dwelling
- Agricultural buildings used to store agricultural products, horticultural products and/or farm animals. Structures containing habitable spaces; spaces used to process, treat or package agricultural products; and/or a spaces occupied by the general public shall require a building permit
- Oil derricks

- Commercial shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems
- Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to the diameter or the width does not exceed 2 to 1
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery – if exterior to a building or structure

WORK NOT REQUIRING AN ELECTRICAL PERMIT OR ZONING APPROVAL (ROZA):

- Minor repair and maintenance work that includes the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles
- Radio and television transmission equipment. The provisions of the Uniform Construction Code apply to equipment and wiring for power supply and the installation of towers and antennas
- The installation of a temporary system for testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus
- Installation or rearrangement of communications wiring in a single-family or two-family dwelling

WORK NOT REQUIRING A MECHANICAL PERMIT (INCLUDING FUEL GAS APPLIANCES/EQUIPMENT) OR ZONING APPROVAL (ROZA):

- A portable heating appliance, portable ventilation equipment, a portable cooling unit, and/or a portable evaporative cooler
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated under the Uniform Construction Code
- A self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and placed into action by motors that are not more than 1 horsepower