

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **I want to build a house, where do I start?**

1. Contact the Planning and Community Development Department to request a “parcel Data Sheet” which will inform you of any potential critical areas located on or within the vicinity of your parcel. If there are critical areas, we will be able to tell you based on the information provided for your proposal, if you will be required to apply for any land use permits prior to being able to submit for your building permit.
2. Work with a septic designer to obtain a septic permit or Asbuilt, issued by the Island County Health Department.
3. An approved Water Availability Form (WAV) signed off By Island County Health.  
***NOTE:*** owners of lots served by a community well may have been told water is available; however, this is not a “water availability”. The WAV is to be taken to the “water purveyor” for signature, and then submitted to the Health Department for approval.
4. An approved access permit; For lots directly accessing onto a County Road AND private roads onto a County road

### **Building Permit Submittal**

1. Master Building Permit Application - **filled out in INK**
2. One and Two Family Dwelling & Attached Accessory Structures Permit
3. Two (2) sets of structural plans (see checklist) WETSTAMPED if applicable
4. Two (2) sets of engineering. With original wet stamp
5. Plot Plan, to scale. Samples of the plot plan available
6. Copy of approved septic permit
7. Copy of approved Water availability
8. Copy of approved Access

\*\*\*\* The plan check fee is required to submit the building permit. The balance is due at time of issuance.\*\*\*

### **I want to build a detached garage/shop (stick or pole const), where do I start?**

1. Contact the Planning and Community Development Department to request a “parcel Data Sheet” which will inform you of any potential critical areas located on or within the vicinity of your parcel. If there are critical areas, we will be able to tell you based on the information provided for your proposal, if you will be required to apply for any land use permits prior to being able to submit for your building permit.
2. If your project will have a bathroom, you may have to have Health Department approval.

### **Building Permit Submittal**

1. Master Building Permit Application - **filled out in INK**
2. Detached Structures less than 3000 sq ft Accessory to Residential Application.
3. Two (2) sets of structural plans (see checklist) WETSTAMPED if applicable
4. Two (2) sets of engineering. With original wet stamp
5. Plot Plan, to scale. Samples of the plot plan available
6. Copy of approved septic permit
7. Copy of approved Water availability
8. Copy of approved Access

\*\*\*\* The plan check fee is required to submit the building permit. The balance is due at time of issuance.\*\*\*

[I want to build a guest cottage, what are the requirements?](#)

Same as a single family residence. Septic & water must be approved for a 2<sup>nd</sup> residence. **Must**, use the same access as the primary residence.

For parcels in the Rural Residential Zone (RR), parcel must be at least 1 acre and able to meet all setbacks

The structure must be less than 1000 sq ft. Island County only issues a specific amount of Guest Cottage Certificates per calendar year; please have all requirements prior to applying.

[Where do I get a permit and which one do I use?](#)

Building permit applications are available online at <http://www.islandcounty.net/planning/building.htm>

All building permits require a **MASTER BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION** (exception:

Mechanical/Plumbing only) and one or more of the following:

**One and Two Family Dwelling**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| <u>Single Family or Two Family Residence</u>          | <u>Spec Home</u>        |
| <u>Attached Accessory (deck, garage, sunroom etc)</u> | <u>Guest House</u>      |
| <u>Modular</u>  | <u>Moved House</u>      |
| <u>Addition to SFR</u>                                | <u>Interior Remodel</u> |

**Detached Residential Accessory Structures Less Than 3000 sq ft**

Detached Accessory (garage, retaining wall, fence etc)

**Non Residential and Multiple Family Residential Units**

- |                       |                   |               |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <u>New Commercial</u> | <u>Apartments</u> | <u>Condos</u> |
| <u>Antennas</u>       |                   |               |

**Tenant Improvement or Change of Use**

Existing Commercial Structure

**Signs**

Commercial sign attached/detached to structure

### **Demolition**

Demolition of a structure over 120 sq ft

### **Manufactured Home**

Placement of a Manufactured home

### **Application for Development in a Floodplain (If designated on Parcel Data Sheet)**

New Residential/Non Residential Structure

Manufactured Home

Improvement/Repair to existing building

### **Shoreline Bulkhead, Docks and Beach Access Stairs**

New/Repair/Replace of Dock, Bulkhead, Stairs, Tram

### **Fire Operational Permit**

Amusement Buildings

Carnivals/Fairs

Cutting and Welding

Hot Work

### **Plumbing and Mechanical Only (Short Form – Master Building Permit Application Not Required)**

New/Replacement or change of location of Propane Tanks, Woodstove, Hot Water Heater, Insert Generator etc

### [How do I submit for a permit?](#)

Permits must be applied for in person, please allow for at least one hour processing your application.

Applications are processed Monday through Thursday from 8:00am until 3:00pm. We are closed on Fridays. For parcels on Whidbey Island apply at 1 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Coupeville (1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Annex), for Camano Island 121 NE Camano Dr Camano Island (Located in the Camano Annex). If your property is within Oak Harbor City Limits, Town of Coupeville, or City of Langley, please contact those jurisdictions directly.

### [What is the permit process? And do I have to have an appointment?](#)

1. Obtain and complete the Master Building Permit Application along with the application that pertains to your project.
2. Submit in person; see the cover sheet for times permits are accepted. For Building permits you or your agent may apply. Please note that any documents required to be recorded cannot be signed by your agent.
3. When you come in your permit will be reviewed by
  - A. The Planning Technician for permit completeness and also for any requirements specific to your parcel (Septic Permit or As-Built, Water Availability, Access, and Plot plan drawn to scale).
  - B. The Plans Examiner will scan your structural plans for the minimum (Foundation, floors,

walls, roofs, egress, stairs, winders, heat, flood elevation on plans, slopes, and noise zone (if required)).

C. Other Departments as needed. (Shoreline, Development, Land Use)

**If at this time, any information/requirements are missing  
your permit will not be accepted and processed.**

4. At the time of submission you will be expected to pay the Plan Check Fee., on your receipt your "Tracking Number" (Which will become the permit number upon issuance of the permit) will be annotated.
5. Your application will be entered into the database and be processed. Permits are reviewed by different departments at the same time.

Plans Examiner – Structural (If there are any deficiencies you/agent will be notified by letter, phone or email for clarification/correction)

Development Coordinator – Bluffs, Drainage, Clearing and Grading

Health Department

Other Departments

6. After review of your entire permit application the Planning Technician will then finish processing your permit. All requirements/restrictions will be annotated on the permit and entered into the database and the remaining fees will be calculated. At this time the Planning Technician will call you/agent and notify you the permit is ready to be picked up and the balance due.
7. Upon payment of the permit fee and any remaining fees due from plan check, the permit will be issued. You/your agent will be given the permit card, a copy of your permit/information conditions of approval sheet, copy of approved site plan, and 1 set of structural plans (site plan, permit card and plans must be on site for inspections).

### [What Building Code does Island County use and where do I find it?](#)

Island County has adopted the 2009 Editions of the national model codes as adopted by the state. Go to the Washington State Building Code Council at [www.sbcc.wa.gov](http://www.sbcc.wa.gov) to view amendments and to order copies of the codes. Island County does not have copies to purchase or lend, check with your local library in the reference section.

### [How do I get an electrical permit and inspections?](#)

Temporary and permanent Electrical power is permitted and inspected by Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Island County does not inspect or permit electrical. Department of Labor and Industries can be reached by the internet at [www.lni.wa.gov](http://www.lni.wa.gov) or for the Mt Vernon Office (360)416-3000 and for the Everett office (425)290-1300.

### [How much is a building permit?](#)

For fees and how to calculate fees see **BUILDING PERMIT VALUATION** [Building Permit Fee Exhibit A-Valuation Chart](#) AND [How to Determine Building Fees](#)

### [How long does it take to get a permit?](#)

Processing time depends on the volume of permits already submitted. Off season may take a couple weeks, peak season may be a couple months. Additionally, if an application requires review by the Health Department or Planning Department, this may add additional time.

### [How long is the permit valid?](#)

After a permit is issued, if work has not begun within 180 days (6 months), the permit is "NULL & VOID". This is verified by checking inspections within the 180 days. Effective July 1 2004, Building Permits are valid for 2 years. Permits prior to July 1, 2004 were valid for 1 year.

### [What if I need more time for my project?](#)

Permits may be renewed for one (1) year at the cost of half of the building permit fee, not to include plan check fee, plumbing or mechanicals. They can only be renewed ONCE, if the project is still not completed a completion permit is required.

### [How do I get an inspection?](#)

The Building Inspection Request Line is (360)679-7307(Whidbey Island) or (360)387-3443 extension 233(Camano Island), leave the request on the answering machine before 3:00pm for next day inspections. Also available is online requests for Whidbey Island only through the Island County Web Site.

### [Do I have to be present for an inspection?](#)

No, you do not have to be present unless personal property is in the structure, Building inspectors will not enter. If entry is required please have a representative on site for entry.

### [What are the requirements for a final?](#)

General requirements, inspections are not limited to the following:

#### **Final - Manufactured Home:**

- Plumbing and ducts off ground and insulated.
- House numbers: 5" on the house and 3" at the road, to be in contrasting colors.
- Hot water tank pressure relief valve to the outside.
- Dryer vent to the outside.
- 6-mil vapor barrier installed.
- Decks, stairs, landings, handrails and guards with approved plans onsite and complete.

**Final:** PRIOR to Final inspection: *Septic, Drainage (if required), Bedroom Affidavit (if required) and Flood Certificate (if required) must be complete and approved.*

***Refer to Permit for any additional requirements for final.***

- **All previous corrections completed.**
- House numbers: 5" on the house and 3" at the road, to be in contrasting colors.
- Landings, decks, stairs, handrails and guards to be complete per code and engineering.
- Safety glass, smoke detectors, egress windows.
- Garage/SFR separation with sealed penetrations.
- Hot Water Tank, Forced Air Unit, Pressure Relief Valve, dryer vent, whole house ventilation.
- Accesses weather stripped.
- Exterior grade, 6" downward slope in 10' away from house or approved drainage or approved drainage.
- Siding to soil minimum 6" clearance.
- Crawl access covered and removable without tools.

[When will I receive my Certificate of Occupancy?](#)

Certificate of Occupancies are issued at the time that the building permit can be closed. This means that all conditions and structural requirements have been completed to the approved permit and plans. It is the property owner's responsibility to retain the certificate for the life of the structure and supply copies as required to requesting entities.

[What is the largest structure I can build without a permit?](#)

The size of buildings exempt from building permits is One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet. All setbacks must be met, and not to be used as habitable space. All additions to any structure require a building permit regardless of the square feet of the addition. If the structure will be plumbed, heated or have electrical those elements are not exempt.

[I'm replacing/building ....., do I need a permit?](#)

See "[When Do I Need a Permit](#)" located on our web site for more information.

[I want to put up a fence, what are the requirements?](#)

Fences less than 6ft tall do not require a building permit. Fences over 6ft tall requires a permit and may require engineering. See, Section 17.03.180.S.6e of the Island County Code (Zoning) for more information.

### [Property lines and disputes:](#)

If survey pins or markers are unable to be located or if the project is close to property lines/setbacks, the owner of the property may be required to hire a Surveyor to stake and string line the site. If there is a dispute as to where the property line rests between property owners, this is a "civil matter". It is recommended you seek counsel from an attorney; Island County cannot provide legal advice or get involved in civil issues.

### [How tall a structure does the county permit?](#)

Island County allows structures to be 35ft tall, however check with your development for any Covenants restricting height. Island County does not enforce covenants, this is a civil matter.

### [How do I find out what my setbacks are for my property?](#)

Contact Planning & Community Development for setbacks from property lines, roads, easements, and other structures, shorelines, wetlands, streams, buffers, geologically hazardous areas and other critical areas

Contact Island County Health Department for setbacks from septic tanks, drainfields, reserve drainfields and wells.