

Department of Code Enforcement Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **Do I need a permit to make my patio larger?**

Patios under 18 inches in height over grade are not required to have an Improvement Location Permit. A new patio will need a Storm Water Drainage review if the enlargement is greater than 25 square feet. If your lot is in a flood zone, you will need to have a drainage review regardless of the size of the project.

- **Do I need a permit to build a deck?**

Whether or not you need a permit to build/rebuild your deck will depend on your project.

If the deck floor is less than 18 inches over grade and within the established setbacks of your home, a permit is not needed. However you **must** notify the assessor for your township.

Decks with a floor height of 18 inches, but under 30 inches, over grade will need an Improvement Location Permit (ILP) and possibly a Stormwater Drainage permit if the flooring does not allow water to drain through.

Decks with a floor height greater than 30 inches over grade require an Improvement Location Permit and Structural Permit. Depending on the construction, a Stormwater Drainage Permit may also be needed.

Decks requiring a structural permit will also need to comply with Indiana Residential Code requirements.

- **Is a permit required to put up a fence?**

For most circumstances, a permit is not needed provided that your fence does not exceed 6 feet in height in the side and rear yards and does not exceed 42 inches (3.5 feet) in height in the front yard. Please keep in mind that corner lots have two front yards. Many newer subdivisions also have covenants which require prior approval and/or certain fence types prior to placement.

If you are thinking of constructing your fence in an easement, you **will** need an encroachment license prior to construction. Likewise you may need a drainage permit if your fence impedes the flow of water onto, or off of, your property. Masonry (brick) walls will always require a drainage review prior to construction.

- **How do I find out what a property is zoned?**

Current zoning information is available online at <http://imaps.indygov.org> using the General Map Viewer or the Zoning Browser. The website is publicly accessible and available 24 hours a day.

- **I live in a historic district and would like to do some home improvement, what do I need?**

Historic districts that have been designated as such by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC), will have specific regulations which will vary by district. For most projects, inside or outside of your house or building, it is advisable to talk to someone with IHPC to

determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) will need to be issued. To contact IHPC, please call 327-4406 or stop in to their office in Suite 1801 of the City/County Building.

Projects that do not involve adding square footage or a detached structure require a Structural Permit and may require a COA. Projects adding square footage or a detached structure will require a COA plus Stormwater Drainage, Improvement Location and Structural Permits.

- **What permits do I need to put a pool in my backyard?**

In most cases, provided that the property is not in a flood zone, three permits will be required: Stormwater Drainage, Improvement Location Permit and Structural.

Exceptions:

If your pool is above ground, less than 18 inches deep and less than 15 feet wide at its widest point, Improvement Location Permits and Structural Permits are not needed. However, a Stormwater Drainage permit may still be needed.

Pools that are between 18 and 29 inches deep, and no wider than 15 feet at the widest point, are required to have an Improvement Location Permit, however a Structural permit *is not* required. A Stormwater Drainage Permit is required if the pool is greater than 120 square feet.

- **What can I do if a neighbor has an inoperable vehicle on his property?**

Report if to the Mayor's Action Center. It is a violation of this Code to store, maintain, or keep any inoperable vehicle outdoors on private property in a zoning district that does not specifically permit such a use.

- **What are some examples of an inoperable vehicle?**

- Any vehicle (car, truck, RV, etc.) without a valid license plate and not stored in a garage
- Any vehicle with one or more flat tire(s)
- Any vehicle, where a front windshield is required, is missing or heavily damaged
- Any vehicle that is otherwise unable to be driven on a public street due to mechanical problems

- **Where can I find information about investigations/permits/violations that have been made or issued?**

Citizens, businesses, and visitors now have continuous online access to their city government.

This efficient, convenient, and interactive link provides valuable information:

-Information related to petitions, permits, licenses, inspections, health department violations, code enforcement cases, and more can be found at this website

-Information regarding the civil code can be found at www.municode.com

-Research permit, case and licensure status at: www.indy.gov/dce/research