

Do I need a permit for building a garage or storage shed?

Yes. A building permit is required for building or razing an attached garage, detached garage, storage shed or outbuilding exceeding 100 square feet.* A building permit is the document that grants legal permission to begin construction of a building project. It also represents a contractual agreement between the homeowner and the city that all work performed will meet or exceed the minimum standards established by the City of Wauwatosa's Municipal Code and the State of Wisconsin's Administrative Code. A building permit is required in order to ensure these standards are met in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Note: A structure built in a floodplain requires a floodplain permit even if a building permit is not required.

What do I need to apply for a building permit?

In order to apply for a building permit, you will need to submit a completed application form, two copies of the construction plans (printed to scale), three copies of the land survey with the proposed structure drawn on each copy, a photograph of the front of the home, a photograph of the area to be affected by the construction, and a \$50 application fee. When your permit is issued, one copy of your plans and land survey will be returned to you.

What needs to be included in the construction plans?

A minimum set of plans will consist of cross section details and elevations of all four sides. Cross section drawings should include exterior grade level, exterior wall and roof construction identifying materials used and spans. Elevations

including information on the exterior appearance of the building, indicating location, size and configuration of doors, windows, roof, exterior grade, and the type of exterior materials. All plans must be drawn to a scale not less than ¼ inch per foot and all dimensions must be accurately figured. Plans for attached garages require information for footing and foundation wall sizes (if applicable) and types of materials.

Why do I need a survey and how can I obtain one?

Surveys are required to ensure that your project complies with today's zoning codes and is the best way to avoid property boundary disputes with neighbors. Oftentimes, the city may have a copy of your survey on file. If not, check your records. Some homeowners may have previously acquired this document in conjunction with the home purchase. Otherwise, the services of a qualified Land Surveyor should be obtained. A number of firms are listed in the Yellow Pages.

What is the likelihood my garage will be approved?

Very likely if the proposed design matches the style of your home. Ideally, a garage should be a miniature version of the house. If the proposed garage or storage shed meets **all** of the following requirements it may be approved by the building inspector:

- All elevations must be shown on the plans
- Exterior building cover matches the dwelling
- Roof pitch matches the dwelling (need not exceed 6:12 pitch)
- Roof color and cover match the dwelling
- Overhangs match the dwelling (need not exceed 12" in projection)

- Photograph of the dwelling front elevation submitted
- Photograph of the affected area to be built submitted

If **any** of the above conditions are not met or the garage or storage building will be built on a corner lot, the application must go to the Design Review Board for approval.

What is the Design Review Board, do I have to appear before it, and when does it meet?

Design Review Boards were created to review and approve the exterior design and aesthetic aspects of building projects. Their purpose is to promote good design and continuity, which often impacts the overall appearance and property value of a neighborhood. The applicant must appear before the Design Review Board in order to answer any questions or concerns they may have. Meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month and the deadline for applications that require Design Review Board approval is the Friday prior to the meeting. Deadlines were established in order to ensure that enough time is allowed to notify applicants, board members, publications and other interested parties that may wish to attend.

How long does it take to get the permit?

That depends. If an application does not require Design Review Board approval, your permit should be ready within one week. If a project was approved on a Thursday night meeting of the Design Review Board and assuming all requirements were submitted at the time of application and no other meetings are required, your permit should be ready the week following the meeting. The number one reason this timeline may not be met is the applicant's failure to submit required information at the time of

* Although a building permit may not be required, it is still necessary to comply with the building and zoning codes.

application. Our office will contact the applicant when the permit has been approved and is ready for issue.

How much will a building permit cost?

Total fees are calculated based on square footage of the proposed garage to be constructed plus plan review. A storage shed is a flat fee of \$80. Razing permits are also based on square footage or a minimum of \$50. The \$50 paid at application is applied to the total cost of the permit.

Are there any location restrictions?

Yes. Foundations for detached garages, storage sheds and outbuildings must be a minimum of eighteen inches from the rear and side lot lines. If located next to an alley, the minimum is five feet. Eave overhangs may not cross over lot lines. These structures are not permitted in the front yard. Attached garages must meet setback requirements and lot coverage limitations for principal buildings. For more information about front or side yard setbacks or if you need setback requirements for new construction, please contact the Development Department at (414) 479-8957.

Are there any other restrictions?

Yes. Total square footage of lot coverage for all buildings cannot exceed 37% and of that total percentage, detached garages, storage sheds, and outbuildings cannot exceed 12% of the lot area. For maximum allowable square footage for garages, storage sheds, or other outbuildings, contact the Development Department at (414) 479-8957. Storage sheds cannot exceed 12 feet in height. Detached garages over 720 square feet typically require a variance and generally, cannot exceed 16 feet in height (measured from the finished floor to

the ridge of the roof). Garage heights of 16-20 feet may be allowed if matching house roof style and pitch with proper documentation. Attached garages must have frost footings and fire separation.

Is the homeowner allowed to run the electrical service to the garage?

Absolutely not. Service must be installed by a licensed electrician. An electrical permit is required and an inspection will be conducted by Buildings & Safety Electrical Inspectors.

Do I need a permit for a dumpster?

Only if it will be located on the street or public sidewalk. If so, please call Engineering Services at (414) 479-8927.

SAFETY TIP:

Why not give Diggers Hotline (800)242-8511 a call prior to excavation?

Questions?

Inspectors are available between the hours of 8:00-9:00 a.m. and 1:00-1:30 p.m. weekdays for code-related questions. Permit-related questions may be directed to the clerical staff (414-479-8907) anytime 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. weekdays. The City code is available online at www.wauwatosa.net. The State Code is also available for reference online at: <http://dps.wi.gov/sb/SB-DivCodesListing.html#20>

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GARAGES & STORAGE SHEDS

ANSWERS TO THE MOST
COMMONLY ASKED
QUESTIONS ABOUT
THE PERMIT PROCESS

