



Building permit review guide

Applicants

This document provides an overview of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Building Permit Review Process, including the key steps and outcomes.

For projects that include new buildings or require modifications to existing buildings or structures, a building permit may be required in addition to a project permit. During the preliminary review phase, port authority employees will confirm if a project requires a building permit.

The port authority issues building permits for buildings and structures within the port authority's jurisdiction using an accredited building code professional contracted for plan review. The port authority requires that design drawings be reviewed to ensure buildings and structures meet the 2020 National Building Code of Canada and the 2020 National Fire Code of Canada. Contracted building code professionals advise port authority employees on the issuance of building permits, inspections and building suitability for occupancy.

Building permits are required for:

- New building or construction
- Changes of building use
- Additions and renovations
- Structural modifications
- Interior renovations
- Temporary buildings/structures on port authority property

Exceptions include works not regulated by the Building Code of Canada and certain in-water works such as:

- Floating docks or piers
- Mooring dolphins, pilings
- Private recreational moorage facilities

Where a project is undergoing a project and environmental review (PER), a building permit submission may be able to be initiated during the course of that review (i.e., prior to approval of a project permit) and processed concurrently; however, a building permit will not be issued until a project permit has been approved.

Construction of buildings and structures that are subject to a building permit cannot begin until an approved building permit has been issued. Occupancy and use of a building or structure cannot begin until an occupancy permit has been issued by the port authority.

The applicant is responsible for paying for the services of the building code professional, as well as the preparation of any documentation or alternative solutions deemed necessary to demonstrate compliance with the 2020 National Building Code of Canada.

Stage 1 – Pre-assessment

- (1) The applicant submits PDF drawings to the port authority via email PER@portvancouver.com (or to the planning lead if they have a project under review by PER) of the proposed building or structure. These drawings should provide an adequate level of detail for an initial assessment by a building code professional, including building or structure design, building setbacks, and site layout. The drawings do not need to be signed and sealed drawings at this stage.
- (2) For new projects, port authority staff review the building to confirm whether a project permit is required, or whether the proposal aligns with a valid project permit. The project is then sent to a building code professional.
- (3) The building code professional provides a fee proposal to the port authority based on the scope of work needed to review the project.
- (4) The port authority forwards the fee proposal electronically to the applicant, plus a 10% administration fee, for approval. If accepted, the applicant signs and returns the proposal to the port authority.
- (5) Once the fee proposal has been approved, the port authority sends the applicant an invoice for this amount.
- (6) Should the final fee from the building code professional be less than what was originally quoted, the difference is refunded at the conclusion of the review (after the occupancy stage). In addition, if during the course of the review total invoice amounts are expected to exceed the initial quote, the building code professional will provide the port authority a revised estimate. This estimate will be reviewed by both the port authority and the applicant for approval prior to sending the associated invoice.

Stage 2 – Code review, BP issuance

- (1) The port authority provides the applicant with the contact information of the building code professional responsible for reviewing the proposal. The applicant contacts the building code professional directly to discuss documentation that is required for the review.
- (2) Required documentation includes:
 - One full sized set of original signed and sealed engineering drawings
 - One 11 x 17 sized set of original signed and sealed engineering drawings
 - Original completed port authority Letters of Assurance signed and sealed
- (3) Applicants send documentation to the building code professional directly, and provide PDF copies to the port authority by email at PER@portvancouver.com. Or using the FTP site, should the package exceed the email size threshold.
- (4) The building code consultant undertakes their review, and contacts the applicant directly to request additional information, if required.
- (5) Once the supplied documentation is considered complete, the building code professional provides a recommendation to the port authority for issuance of a building permit.
- (6) If approved, a building permit is issued by the port authority. Attached and forming part of the permit is the recommendation letter, one copy of the full-sized drawings, Letters of Assurance and any other relevant documentation from the review.
- (7) Construction of a building (including foundations) may not begin until a building permit has been issued.
- (8) The building permit and all relevant drawings and documentation must be kept onsite during construction.
- (9) During construction, the applicant is required to contact the building code professional directly to inform them of construction status and coordinate any site visits, should these be required.

Stage 3 – Final inspection, occupancy

- (1) Following completion of construction, the building code professional typically conducts a site visit for the purposes of a final inspection. It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the building code professional and schedule this visit, as described in the building permit conditions.
- (2) Following completion, the applicant or its contractor provides the building code professional with original copies of Letters of Assurance or other documents for review.
- (3) Once all the occupancy requirements have been met, the building code professional sends a letter and the required Letters of Assurance to the port authority recommending that the building can be occupied.
- (4) The port authority issues a letter of confirmation to the applicant at which point the building/structure may be occupied or used. Occupancy of the structure is not permitted until an occupancy permit has been issued by the port authority.
- (5) The applicant is required to send record drawings to the port authority once construction is complete.

If you have questions about the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's Building Permit Process, please contact the planning and development department at 604.665.9047 or PER@portvancouver.com.