Residential Improvement Application Training

September 30, 2021 @ 9:30am

Questions & Answers

Question 1:

Is there a link to this PowerPoint presentation available for download?

City Response 1:

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation can be found here

Question 2:

Are apartment buildings supposed to be under this permit application type?

City Response 2:

No, a Residential Improvements Permit Application is only for work on lots with existing single-family dwellings. Apartment buildings are considered commercial buildings and all new construction related to apartment buildings, including accessory structures & additions and carports fall under the **Commercial Project Application**. Minor commercial building repairs, such as reroof, drywall, framing or other interior cosmetic repairs fall under the **Minor Building Repair Permit Application.**

Question 3:

Can a Licensed Professional pay his fees with an escrow account?

City Response 3:

Yes, a licensed professional can pay fees with an escrow account on this record type. To use escrow, the Escrow Owner must be on the application/permit and identified as Escrow Owner Contact type. If you are an authorized agent allowed to use an Escrow Account, both the Escrow Owner and Authorized Agents need to be on the App/Permit and identified as Escrow Owner and Authorized Agent Contact Types. Please note, this permit type is NOT a combination permit so there are no Licensed Professionals on this permit, except the Residential Building Contractor Licensed Professional or Home Improvement Contractor Licensed Professional.

Question 4:

Is a pergola in the backyard classified as a carport?

City Response 4:

A pergola is not considered a carport, but it is a detached building with a roof and therefore a type of accessory building (such as a detached garage or a large shed).

Question 5:

Can we submit the application online and go to the office and pick up the permit? Will there be a fee?

Response 5:

There is no fee since you submitted the application online. The $10.00 fee is assessed if staff submits the application for you. Please keep in mind that the system will email you the permit confirmation once

permit fees are paid. If your permit application requires a Completeness Review first, the Customer Advocate team must review and approve the review before you can pay fees and obtain a permit.

Question 6:

How do we delete a permit that was submitted and/or started but not needed or not completed?

City Response 6:

Online portal users are not able to simply delete any submitted, temporary or incomplete applications. However, the system will automatically drop or purge all applications with a TMP (i.e. 21TMP-140152), number after 90 calendar days. These are applications that are incomplete.

If an application has been submitted/completed and you no longer need it, you can use the Withdrawal/Refund amendment record to withdraw your application. Following is the link to our guide: Withdrawal of Application & Refund

Question 7:

When did you implement the requirement that all subwork (trade work) has to be completed before I can schedule the Building Final inspection on this permit type?

City Response 7:

There is no need to submit a final letter; however, if the Residential Improvement Permit indicates you have trade work (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) the inspector cannot pass a Building Final until all the trade (subwork) that is part of the scope, is completed.

The requirement has always been in our code Chp. 10-11 (c) (14). We were finding a high number of open trade permits that were left open in Hansen and sought a way to improve this by looking into enforcing this section of the code even further to assist contractors from having several open and then expired permits in the new system. Our hope is Accela and the new LOC and C of O process for residential permits will help close all project related permits.

Question 8:

I would like to clarify a shed size question. Is there a minimum size that a permit is not required for a storage shed? I have received mixed answers, particularly on anything 300 sq. ft or less. No power or water, just storage.

City Response 8:

The City of San Antonio amendments to the International Building Code in section 10-6 (e) Work exempt for permit (1) Building, states, “a. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed three hundred (300) square feet (27.9 m 2).”

Question 9:

I've submitted several permit applications online, but why has it been taking longer than 2-3 days to get my permit?

City Response 9:

Reviews are taking a bit longer than normal due to increase in permit activity. Development Services added positions in FY22 and is working to hire, onboard and train staff. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused.

Question 10:

Do Home Elevation Contractor fall under New Residential Permit? We do foundation as well as house raises with or without slab.

City Response 10:

A **New Residential Permit Application** includes a type for a new foundation. That is intended to build a new foundation on a vacant lot where a house move is anticipated. The future home to sit on the foundation requires a House Move Application. Repairs for any existing foundation are still under the **Minor Building Repair Application**. Please see question #19 for additional details.

Question 11:

I'm in the new BuildSA and it makes me type in my contractor's license number every time. It isn't saved in my login like it is for hers. I wish it was. That would be a lot faster.

City Response 11:

If logged in as the LP or a delegate of the LP, the license should be available to choose from at the beginning of the application submittal.

Question 12:

What if you are both the contractor (licensed) and property owner? Is there a difference in permit fees?

City Response 12:

There is no difference in permit fees based on whether you are a homeowner or a licensed professional.

Question 13:

If, as a client, we want the contractor to add our organization as a contact, would they click "Add new"?

City Response 13:

If the organization exists in the system, the **Look Up** function should always be used first.

Question 14:

If the property owner can pull a residential improvement permit without a licensed professional (LP), is it required that the licensed professional pull a permit too?

City Response 14:

Only one permit is required. A property owner can pull a residential improvement permit without an LP if they are performing the work on their own property. A separate trade permit is required if a mechanical, electrical, or plumbing permit, or a sidewalk permit is required, these permits must be requested by the authorized licensed professional. A homeowner can also pull a Plumbing permit, if they are performing the work in their home (claimed as their Homestead).

Question 15:

Is there a way to contact our reviewer? I have been waiting for a review that was due on 09/27 and has not been done.

City Response 15:

You can find contact information for all DSD employees on our DSD website. The link to the employee contact list is the following: https://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/About/Employees

Question 16:

What about retaining walls over 4'?

City Response 16:

All Retaining Walls over 4-feet (or walls under 4-feet that support a surcharge) require a permit. The application is under the Commercial Project Application (even if it's a residential retaining wall). The required sub-type to check under the Commercial Project Application is a Minor Building Structure. A separate list will come up to choose Retaining Wall and this is where you input the information. A Commercial Project Application always requires plans to be submitted.

Question 17:

Why are permit approvals taking so long lately?

City Response 17:

We understand permit reviews/issuance may be taking longer at this time. We've experienced an increase in permitting activity and our team is working toward hiring, onboarding and training new staff. We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused.

Question 18:

Why can't I schedule inspections as a delegate?

City Response 18:

We are aware of an issue with delegate's ability to schedule ***some*** inspections on behalf of the Licensed Professional. We have a trouble ticket to address this issue. In the meantime, if you are having issues with scheduling inspections as a delegate, the best option is to log in as the Licensed Professional to schedule the inspection(s).

Question 19:

Where can I find a list of which residential building permit application I should use for my project?

City Response 19:

We've posted the following matrix online.

Residential Building Permits Types (BuildSA)

Application	Permits Issued from Application	Additional Description	Notes
Residential Improvements Permit Application	Accessory Building	Must be 1,000 SQ feet **or under** and 1 Story	One application can be used to request one or more of these permit types
	Home Addition	Must be 1,000 SQ feet **or under** and 1 Story	
	Carport	Must be 1,000 SQ feet **or under** and 1 Story	
	Covered Patio/Porch	Must be 1,000 SQ feet **or under** and 1 Story	
	Deck	Must be 1,000 SQ feet **or under** and 1 Story	
	Swimming Pool	All Residential Swimming Pools	
Residential Building Permit Application	New Residential Home	Single family, Duplex, Triplex, Townhomes	One application can be used to request only one of these types
	Accessory Structures & Additions	**Over** 1,000 Sq feet and/or 2 story	
	Accessory Dwelling Unit	All **secondary** dwelling units	
	Prototype Plan For Future Homes		
	Foundation	New residential foundation on a vacant lot - intended for house moves only	
Minor Building Repair Permit Application	Foundation Repair	Commercial and Residential Repairs of existing foundations.	One application can be used to request only one of these types
	Reroof Repair	Commercial and Residential reroof of existing commercial and residential buildings	
	Residential Repair	Minor Residential Repairs	
	Minor Commercial Repair Permit	MInor Commercial Repairs	