



Residential Building, Trade, & Zoning Permits Flowchart
Updated 3/13/25

Symbol Key



INITIAL SUBMISSION

INTAKE

PLAN REVIEW

ISSUANCE

TRADE PERMITS

CONSTRUCTION AND INSPECTIONS

OCCUPANCY

NOTE: This flowchart is for illustrative purposes only. Not every submission will follow this exact review flow.

1. Link to the City of Fairfax [Permit Portal](#).

2. See step-by-step instructions: [How To Apply - Residential Building and Zoning Permits](#)

3. If a Building Permit is required, the portal will create a temporary record (TMP). Customers must log into the portal to complete and submit the record, which will become a BLD or building permit record.

4. A resubmission fee may be required for the second resubmission and any subsequent resubmissions.

5. If disturbance is above 2500 SF, a **House Grading Plan** (aka an Erosion and Sediment Control or E&S Plan) will be required. See guides on previous page for **House Grading Plans**.

6. Architectural Review (**BAR**) may be required. For new residential developments and properties located in the Historic or Transition Overlay Districts, additional approvals may be required. See guides on previous page for **BAR**.

7. Public Works review may be required based on the scope.

8. Residential Use Permits are required for new construction and large additions.

9. If you are applying for a standalone trade permit (i.e. not affiliated with a building permit), start at step 11.

10. See step-by-step instructions: [How To Apply - Residential Trade Permit](#)

11. Your trade permit will only be routed to Zoning for review in a few instances, those where the improvement has an affect on the exterior of the property. Common examples include exterior mechanical equipment, solar panels, and electrical vehicle charging equipment. In these instances you may be required to apply for a separate Zoning Permit. Zoning staff will contact you if that is the case.

13. Some scopes of work will require multiple inspections throughout the construction process prior to the final inspection. Note that the building permit cannot be finalized until all affiliated trade permits have been finalized.

15. Wall check surveys allow Zoning staff to ensure the structure is positioned correctly on the site before the entire structure is built. If the height of the structure is within 3 feet of the maximum height in the Zoning district (typically 35 feet), a Height Certification will be required. See example in the accompanying guide: [How to Apply - Residential Building and Zoning Permits](#).

17. Residential Use Permit (RUP) inspections are scheduled through the Permit Portal. See instructions: [How To Request RUP Inspections](#).

19. Certificates of Occupancy (COs) are generally only issued for new construction. Note, neither a CO nor a RUP will be issued until all Code and RUP inspections are passed.

20. For a separate guide on the bond release process, see [Bond Release for Single-Family Construction](#) on previous page.

21. This is the end of the building, zoning, and trade permit process, but there are other processes that may need to be completed depending on the scope of work, such as site plan, stormwater review, and bonding. See additional flowcharts on the previous page.

12. Building and trade inspections are scheduled through the Permit Portal. See instructions: [How To Schedule Inspections](#). Note you cannot schedule your final building inspection before final trade inspections are scheduled.

14. A reinspection fee may be required for instances where the contractor fails to meet the inspector onsite, or for repeat rejections for the same issue.

18. The initial Urban Forester inspection will be arranged by staff, no action needed on the part of the developer. To schedule a reinspection, contact the Urban Forester directly: Anna.Safford@fairfaxva.gov.