

# Planning and Development *Handbook*



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## Overview

In 1852 the City of Tullahoma was chartered. Today, the City of Tullahoma represents the largest city in Coffee County with nearly 18,000 people. The City of Tullahoma is a progressive and growing community, governed by a Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The City of Tullahoma's administrative offices provide assistance to homeowners, business owners, developers, and contractors. It is the administration's goal to achieve safe and high-quality development within the community.

## Zoning

The City of Tullahoma's ZONING ORDINANCE contains information that divides your locality into specific "zoned" areas depending on what types of activities are permitted there. These "zoning districts" are very exact about the use to which property may be put. When you apply for a building permit, your application will automatically be reviewed by the City Planner for applicability.

For instance, you may find that the house that you would like to build will be in a "residential single-family" district; that means that only single-family homes can be built in your neighborhood. Factories, department stores or office buildings cannot suddenly spring up next door.

Zoning regulations protect property values by making sure new development is compatible with the surrounding community and maintains the character of established neighborhoods. Every application for a building permit is reviewed to make sure it complies with the city's zoning ordinance. The City of Tullahoma has 18 different zoning district classifications. Each has regulations controlling the amount of property required for building, building size and location of the lot, off-street parking, signs and other environmental, health and safety standards. These regulations also govern the screening of commercial property and other neighborhood concerns for new construction.

But zoning codes go even farther. In an attempt to maintain the design and character of your neighborhood or area, the codes impose certain restrictions about where you can build on your property and how big your building may be. Zoning codes can make your plans unacceptable no matter how well you have designed the project, so get the information as soon as possible and save yourself a lot of trouble.

If you are planning on constructing a garage, shed, room addition, deck, porch or swimming pool, the zoning regulations of the City must be reviewed.

## Codes

While zoning deals with your property and the relationship of your building to the neighborhood or area, the BUILDING CODES deal with the building itself. Identified as Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Fuel Gas, Energy Conservation and Electrical Codes, they are designed to safeguard health and safety in every building.

The BUILDING CODE sets minimum construction standards for new buildings, as well as for additions to, and remodeling of, existing buildings. Every building permit is reviewed to ensure compliance with the appropriate building code. One-, two-, and three-family structures are governed by the International Residential Code. This code was developed specifically to deal with houses, garages and similar structures. The International Building Code (IBC), governs all buildings other than one and two-family dwellings, whether they are commercial, industrial or multi-family dwellings. In addition to building construction, these codes set minimum standards for plumbing, electrical, heating, fire protection and ventilating systems. Copies of these codes are available in some libraries. Copies may also be reviewed at the Department of Planning & Codes. The Building Official is appointed by the City Manager and certified by the State of Tennessee to monitor building construction and building safety.

The PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE sets minimum standards for the upkeep of businesses, houses, yards, and vacant lots. These standards are established to prevent blighting effects of substandard structures and premises. The standards also help to protect the value of surrounding properties and to eliminate hazardous conditions. Property Maintenance Standards are regulations that prescribe good manners in dealing with our neighbors. Ways in which properties can affect our neighbors include whether or not properties are clean or littered, paint on houses is sound or peeling, and lawns are mowed or left uncut.

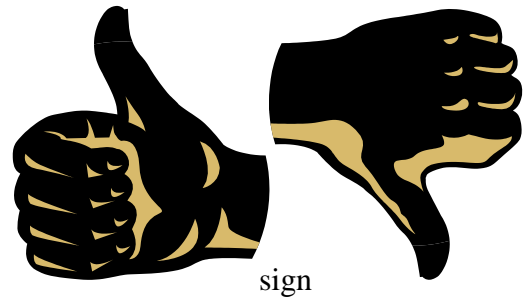
The FIRE CODE was established to promote safety. Local ordinances have incorporated the International Fire Code and all Referenced National Fire Protection Association Standards. The Fire Code regulates the safe occupancy and operation of businesses, places of assembly, and multifamily residential developments. The City of Tullahoma Fire Department will gladly assist with any fire safety questions. The Tullahoma Fire Department may be reached at **(931) 455-0936**.

## Zoning Issues

To help resolve issues involving the Zoning Ordinance and to assist community development, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) has established two citizen groups, the Planning Commission (PC), and the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The Planning Commission reviews, and has the authority to approve, new subdivisions. It also handles rezoning requests and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). The Board of Zoning Appeals hears requests for variances to the Zoning Code. Normally, the Planning Commission meets the fourth Monday of every month, and the Board of Zoning Appeals meets as called when there is business to be conducted. Both groups meet at the Tullahoma Municipal Building, 201 West Grundy Street, at 4:00 p.m.

### Variances:

Variances are justifiable alternatives to the City's Zoning Ordinance. Variances are reviewed and granted, or denied, by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Variances are typically requested for exceptions to buildings size requirements, setbacks to property lines, sizes, etc. Variances that are minor in nature may be considered by the Department of Planning and Codes.



### Planned Unit Developments:

Planned Unit Developments, also called PUDs, are land development projects which are comprehensively planned as a single entity contained in a defined geographical area. PUD's involve residentially or commercially zoned tracts of land and tend to promote a greater provision for open space, a mixture of housing types and land uses, and the preservation of significant natural features. A PUD requires a property owner to establish a plan for the property. The PUD ensures that the land is developed in a visually organized manner, even though the site may be developed in different stages over several years. By intent of the City of Tullahoma Zoning Ordinance, no minimum acreage requirement has been established for a Planned Unit Development. Approval of a PUD requires a public hearing before the City's Planning Commission so that citizens, the commission, and staff can offer input. The Commission then approves of the PUD as submitted, approves of the PUD with conditions, or denies it. Applicants have up to 30 days to appeal a Planning Commission decision to City Council.

### Conditional Uses:

A conditional use is a use permitted in a particular zoning district only upon showing that such use in a specified location will comply with all the conditions and standards for the location or operation of such use specified in a zoning ordinance. The Board of Zoning Appeals is

responsible for determining the merits of an application for a conditional use permit. In doing so, the Board of Zoning Appeals may approve, conditionally approve, or deny such application.

## Certificate of Occupancy:

Prior to the occupancy or use of any newly erected building or structure, to the continued occupancy of an altered, reconstructed or enlarged building or structure, and to the change of ownership or change of business, a Certificate of Occupancy must be requested by the property owner. The Building Official then issues a Certificate of Occupancy when any improvement (new building, addition, etc.) is successfully completed, and it is demonstrated that the structure, and the proposed use, conform with the information contained in an approved building permit application.

**City of Tullahoma Tennessee**  
Department of Planning & Codes

\_\_\_\_\_ This Building has been occupied before a Final Inspection has been conducted.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Permanent \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary (Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_)

# *Certificate of Occupancy*

The following building or portion thereof has been inspected for compliance with the requirements of Occupancy Group \_\_\_\_\_ as specified in the 2006 Edition of the International \_\_\_\_\_ Code.

Building Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Building Permit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Owner / Contractor: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspectors Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Final Inspection: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupant Load: \_\_\_\_\_

This Certificate is a Legal Document and shall be posted in a conspicuous place at or close to the main entrance of the building or structure and permanently maintained.

# Permits

## What is a permit?

A permit is a license between the city and the applicant. The application must explain (in detail) the work to be done. This often requires construction drawings to adequately explain the work proposed. If the work conforms to city codes, a permit will be issued. A permit application may require additional information



or corrections prior to its approval. The person to whom the permit is issued is responsible for the work being properly executed. A permit fee is to be **paid prior to permit issuance**. The fee schedule is available for review at the Department of Planning and Codes.

The (issued) permit is an authorization to begin work. Any condition or special restrictions will be noted on the copy of the drawing. Changes to the approved plans may not be automatically approved. Applicants should check with city staff before starting work. Required inspections will be listed on the permit as a convenient reminder. Depending on the size of the job and clarity of the drawings, it may take 10 to 15 working days to receive a permit.

## Why do I need a permit?

There are several advantages to doing projects under a building permit. The primary one is that getting permit assures that you are in compliance with local codes and regulations and provides for services of your local plan reviewers and inspectors. The plan reviewers will review your drawings and submittals for code compliance and notify you of any nonconforming items before issuing the permit. Obviously, it is better to discover codes discrepancies during the plan preparation process rather than after your project is under construction. The inspector approves each phase of the construction process, checking to see that all work is done safely, properly and in conformance with the approved plans. Inspectors can also advise you on how to proceed if you get stuck.

Secondly, there are legal and financial liabilities that you may face when you don't get a permit. Working without a permit is illegal and can result in hefty fines and can pose serious complications for you when you decide to either occupy or sell your building. Your fire and liability insurance ratings may go up if not invalidated if you work without a permit. If there is a fire in your structure, the insurance company may very well use the illegal work to deny your claim.

Permits provide uniform minimum standards for construction, repair, alteration, and maintenance of buildings and structures. A permit shall be obtained **before** work begins to ensure that the work meets city standards and is inspected by state certified inspectors.

## When do I need a permit?

The City of Tullahoma requires permits for all construction, zoning compliance, and new and replacement, as well as repairing of plumbing, heating, air conditioning, electrical work, fire protection, sign installation, drive approaches, curb cuts, sidewalks, storm water, and water and sewer improvements.

## How do I get a permit?

A contractor that is properly licensed in the State of Tennessee to perform the work in which the permit is applied shall make application for the permit.

An exception to this rule is permits pulled on single-family dwellings. A homeowner or current occupant of a single-family dwelling, where he or she resides, may apply for permits to do work. Landlords cannot secure permits. The person to whom the permit is issued assumes responsibility that the work is completed properly.

Permit applications are available at the Planning and Codes Department or you can download them from the City's Website.

## Where do I get a permit?

Building Permit Applications may be submitted to the Department of Planning and Codes, Planning Annex Building, 321 North Collins Street, during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; or call **(931) 455-2282** for further information.

Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, and Sign Permit Applications may also be submitted there.

Any permit application that requires a Private Sewage Disposal System (Septic Tank) must submit application to the Coffee County or Franklin County Field Office of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for approval. Information on these offices will be given to the applicant by the Tullahoma Planning & Codes Department if project requires this.

Drive approaches, curb cuts, sidewalks, and most water and sewer permits may be obtained at the Department of Public Works, 942 Maplewood Avenue, Tullahoma, TN 37388, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; or call **(931) 454-1768**.

For water and sewer service, you must complete a Utility Service Availability form at the Tullahoma Utilities Board Building located at 901 South Jackson Street, Tullahoma, TN 37388,



during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; or call (931) 455-4515 for further information.

## Are drawings required?

Drawings and specifications, drawn to scale and with dimension, which effectively describe the project that is being built, must be submitted to the City of Tullahoma. The city requires that drawings be as specific as possible on the details of the construction (see also Building Permit Drawings). After final plan review, city staff will return one marked set of drawings.

## Building Permit Drawings

The following is a list of items normally included in a set of construction drawings. This list is not applicable to every construction project, but it is provided here as a guide to help create or review drawings prior to applying for a building permit.

**ALL DRAWINGS REQUIRE THE NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DRAWINGS.**

1. The first sheet includes an index of all drawings provided. Plans for commercial permits should include the use group, construction type, and area of the project.
2. A site plan that includes:
  - the dimensions of the lot and the location of buildings on the lot;
  - location of right-of-ways and easements as they exist on the lot;
  - distances between buildings or structures must be indicated, along with the location of any overhead or underground utilities, driveways, parking spaces, proposed site grading, and drainage improvements;
  - proposed landscaping, location of fire hydrants, and lighting improvements must be provided.
3. Floor plans of all floors, including basements. To be complete, floor plans should indicate door swings and sizes, stairs, ramps, windows, and shafts.
4. Elevation drawings as needed to describe exterior work. If necessary, floor-to-floor dimensions.
5. Wall sections and details necessary to describe wall, ceiling, floor and roof materials and construction.
6. Structural information including material grades, spacing and sizes, and a list of all the design assumptions. Trusses or pre-engineered materials require professional certification or certification by the manufacturer indicating design assumption and installation requirements. Detail of any significant connections.
7. Description of plumbing as well as mechanical and fire protection systems are requested. Manufacturer's installation instructions need to be provided to the inspectors to approve placement, connection, and venting of any unit.
8. Any other information that is necessary to describe the proposed work. All drawings should be drawn to scale.

# Types of Permits

## Building Permits



*Permits and inspections are required for:*

- New construction, including additions
- Signs: permanent, temporary, special events
- Fences
- Covered patio slabs, decks, enclosures
- Pools
- Residential construction work: this includes new houses, garages, sheds, pools, patio covers, enclosures, decks, porches, fireplaces, carports, retaining walls, room additions, remodeling, and structural repair.
- Building removal or demolition
- Alterations regulated by the Building Code
- Fire damage repair

## Other Permits

*Permits and inspections are required for new installations, repairs or replacement of:*

- Heating
- Air Conditioning
- Plumbing
- Boilers
- Fire Sprinkler Installation, removal or alteration

## Sign Permits

The City of Tullahoma requires a permit for all new signs. A modification to an existing sign which changes the sign area, height, length, or location also requires a permit.

Requirements for sign permits:

- A site plan illustrating the dimensions of the property where the proposed sign will be located, the location and width of all public entrances, driveways, and parking lots, length of the building front, and the location of the sign relative to the property line.
- An elevation drawing of the proposed sign and a detail showing its mounting structure, including all dimensions related to the sign areas and height.
- A description of all existing signs on the respective site.

**Exception:** Temporary special event signs require only the dates of the event, the setback of the sign, and an elevation drawing illustrating the size, type, height, and supporting structure of the sign.

## Complaints or Inquiries Concerning Code Violations

Field inspectors investigate all inquiries and complaints concerning code and ordinance violations. An inspection can be requested by calling, writing to, or visiting the Planning and Codes Department at 321 North Collins Street, **(931) 455-2282**.

When violations occur, the inspector works to resolve the complaint or nuisance by personally talking with the property or business owners or by official notice. If this does not resolve the problem, the inspector may serve a legal notice which, if not complied with, could result in charges being filed in municipal court. The city strives to resolve complaints and ensure compliance as quickly as possible. As a resident or business operator, one may become annoyed by a particular situation. The City of Tullahoma cannot facilitate the settlement of all violations and, in some cases, does not have jurisdiction over a particular complaint or nuisance such as a property line dispute. In those cases, the property owner may need to resolve the problem through civil action. City staff investigates all complaints whether or not the problem can be resolved by an inspector. If the problem cannot be resolved, a referral to other agencies will be made.

### Where Can I Get Assistance?

For any help, please call the Department of Planning and Codes at **(931) 455-2282**. City staff will gladly schedule an appointment with one of the city inspectors. Although the inspectors cannot make any recommendations regarding design or economic feasibility, they will answer specific questions about code provisions.



Copies of the city's building, zoning, and property codes ordinances can be accessed on the City's website at [www.tullahoma-tn.com](http://www.tullahoma-tn.com).

Copies of the codes and technical documents may be inspected at the contractor's library at the Planning and Codes Department office during regular business hours.

Inspectors are available for questions and consultations, and can be reached in their offices during regular business hours. Again, inspections must be scheduled at least a day in advance. Special inspections, which may involve an additional fee, are available upon request.

We strongly encourage all who seek assistance with economic development activities, including retail, commercial, and industrial, to call the City of Tullahoma Department of Planning and Codes.

Department of Planning and Codes: **(931) 455-2282**.

# Thank You

## Planning and Zoning Summary

PC = Planning Commission

BZA=Board of Zoning Appeals

BMA=Board of Mayor & Aldermen

ITEM	APPLICABILITY	INITIAL STEP	APPROVAL PROCESS	COMMENTS
<b>Subdivision (minor)</b>	When splitting a piece of land into <b>fewer than 5 lots.</b>	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes. Submit a survey and legal description.	Staff review & recommendation for PC. Process time is approx. 30 days from submittal deadline (1st of the month).	Public hearing is required. Additional right-of-way may be required.
<b>Subdivision (major)</b>	When subdividing a parcel of land into <b>5 or more lots.</b>	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes. Submit a plan detailing lot and street layout.	Staff review & recommendation for PC. Process time is approx. 60 to 75 days from submittal deadline.	Process includes (2) two steps: 1.) Preliminary to PC. 2.) Final to PC. Right-of-Way required.
<b>Rezoning</b>	When the proposed use of land is not consistent with the permitted uses of the district.	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes. Submit site plan and pertinent details.	Staff review & recommendation for PC and BMA. Process time is 60 to 75 days from submittal deadline.	Rezoning is only considered applicable if the proposed use is compatible with the city land-use plan.
<b>PUD (Rezoning)</b>	When an applicant cannot satisfy the lot requirements and/or land use of the residing zoning district.	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes. Submit site plan/record plan.	Staff review and recommendation for PC. Process time is 60 to 90 days.	Process includes two (2) steps: 1.) Preliminary plan to PC. 2.) Final to PC
<b>Variance</b>	When an applicant cannot comply with the strict terms of the zoning ordinance.	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes.	Staff review and recommendation to BZA. Process time is approx. 30 days from submittal deadline.	Variance is not applicable for use of land. Public hearing is required.
<b>Conditional Use</b>	When an applicant proposes a use of land, which falls under conditional use approval.	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes.	Staff review & recommendation to BZA. Process time is approx. 30 days from submittal deadline.	Final to BXA. Public hearing is required.
<b>Zoning permit and certificate</b>	A requirement when erecting, altering or constructing any type of building, structure or addition. Or changing the Occupancy of a building.	Contact the Department of Planning & Codes.	Staff review and approval. Process time for Certificate of Occupancy is 2 to 5 days.	The C.O. allows for the use of a structure. The certificate is a final document of occupancy.

**Tullahoma Department of Planning and Codes**  
**312 North Collins Street**  
**P. O. Box 807**  
**Tullahoma, TN 37388**  
**Phone: (931) 455-2282**  
**Fax: (931) 454-1765**  
**[www.tullahoma-tn.com](http://www.tullahoma-tn.com)**