



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

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BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION HANDBOOK

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER COUNTER OPEN

8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday-Friday

New applications are accepted between 8:00am to 3:30pm

NEVADA COUNTY BUILDING CODES

2025 California Residential Code (2024 IRC)
2025 California Green Building Standards Code
2025 California Building Code (2024 IBC)
2025 California Plumbing Code (2024 UPC)
2025 California Mechanical Code (2024 UMC)
2025 California Electrical Code (2023 NEC)
Nevada County Land Use and Development Code
(Title 14)

2025 California Energy Code
2021 International Property Maintenance Code
2025 California Fire Code (2024 IFC)
2025 California Existing Building Code
2025 California Historical Building Code
2021 International Swimming Pool & Spa
Code

Building permits are required for all construction not specifically exempted (see exempted work list listed on page 4). This includes houses, garages, most decks, commercial projects, installation of propane appliances, grading, projects requiring framing, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, etc. Each item must be listed on the permit; work not listed will not be covered by the permit. Building permits are active for one (1) year from permit issuance and are eligible for one (1) year extension, based upon justifiable cause. Permits are extended for one (1) year when there has been construction progress with an approved building inspection, up to final inspection.

Some permits will require approval from other departments (County Planning, Environmental Health, Fire, Nevada City Planning, etc.) prior to submittal or issuance (i.e. cell towers, second dwelling units and commercial projects). Please consult with the Nevada County Community Development Agency (CDA) (530) 265-1222 before submittal of building permit application.

Permits are issued to an owner-builder, contractor, and an agent with a letter of authorization from the owner, an agent with an original power of attorney, or a lessee with a copy of a signed lease.

Building permit fees do not include all fees. **Other fees may include:**

- Fire mitigation fees
- School mitigation fees - **living/accessible area only**
- Park & Recreation fees - **new residence (including second dwellings)**
- Road fees - **new residence (including second dwellings)**

PLAN CHECK:

- Plan check fees are due at the time of application
- Plans are checked in order received

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to track the status of the permit.

Permit status may be checked on our [permitting portal](#) and following the guidelines in [this handout](#).

FOR NEW RESIDENCE:

- 3 sets of building plans (structural) including 3 site plans
- 2 sets of wet signed energy calculations (Title 24) as a page of the plans
- 2 sets of wet stamped/signed truss calculations- (if manufactured trusses are used)
- 2 sets of wet stamped/signed engineered calculations (if required)
- Site Plan Checklist must be completed and signed at the time of submittal
- A residential permit will not be issued without evidence of septic and well permits (if applicable)
- **Keep in mind that we also accept Electronic Project Plan Submittals. Visit our website at <https://permits.nevadacountyca.gov/CitizenAccess/Default.aspx> for complete information.**

FOR RESIDENTIAL ADDITIONS, REMODELS, DECKS OR ACCESSORY STRUCTURES (i.e., barn, garage or workshop):

- 3 sets of building plans (structural) including 3 site plans
- 2 sets of wet or digitally signed energy calculations (if applicable) as a page of the plans
- 2 sets of wet or digitally stamped/signed truss calculations (if manufactured trusses are used)
- 2 sets of wet or digitally stamped/signed engineered calculations (if required)
- Site Plan checklist must be completed and signed at the time of submittal

REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANS TO BE ACCEPTED:

- Shall be drawn to scale (must be 1"=10', 1"=20', 1"=30', 1"=40', 1"=50', 1"=60' - scales for site plan only) and fully dimensioned
- Shall be dark lined on light background, clear and legible (no graph lines)
- Shall be no smaller than **11" x 17"** (larger recommended)
- Detailed site plan (see [Comprehensive Site Plan Development Checklist](#))
- Detailed foundation plan: (Scale ¼" = 1' minimum) Show all wall and footing outlines, access doors, piers, girders, floor joists and dimensions.
- Floor plan(s) showing **use** of each/every area: (Scale ¼" = 1' minimum) One (1) plan for each story. If building has a crawl space, provide separate foundation plan. Direction, size and spacing of all floor and ceiling framing members, columns and piers. Location of all partitions. Indicate door and window sizes and direction of swing. Location and size of all permanently installed equipment, such as kitchen cabinets, closets, storage, plumbing fixtures, water heater, heating system, etc. Location of all electrical equipment, including main service panel, switches, outlets, fixtures, etc.
- Four (4) exterior elevations: (Scale 1/8" = 1' minimum) Show front, rear, and both side elevations (use directions N, S, E, W). Wall finishes where more than one type is used. Depth of all footings, if stepped type. Finish floor line. Finish grade lines at building.
- Details and cross sections: (Scale 3/8" = 1' minimum) Section through exterior wall: showing all details of construction from footings to highest point of roof. Where more than one type of wall or roof material is used, show each type. Section through all stairs, landing, and stairwells, including headroom clearances. Where trusses are used, provide stress diagram and gusset details. Section through fireplace.
- Two (2) copies of wet or digitally signed (Title 24) energy calculations as a page of the plans.
- Indicate square footage of **each** area and show the occupancy and construction type(s).
- List total square footage of **each** occupancy area on Title sheet (residence, garage, deck, etc.) ☒
- Electrical plan (can be shown on the floor plan).
- Two (2) copies of wet or digitally stamped/signed engineered truss calculations.

Note: If building is located on a lakefront lot, or in an extreme snow load area, the site plan must be stamped and signed (wet signature) by an engineer. Show all existing and proposed structures, septic, leach field, well, driveway, easements, etc. on each site plan.

PERMIT ISSUANCE:

- Inspection fees are due at permit issuance
- Plan check approval
- Site plan approval
- Environmental Health approval (septic and water)
- School mitigation fees paid-receipt
- Fire mitigation fees paid-receipt
- Park and Recreation fees paid (if applicable)
- Road fees paid (if applicable)

Construction may begin

PERMIT FINAL:

- Required department signatures (Planning, Fire, Environmental Health, etc.) completed on permit card
- Final inspection must be made prior to permit expiration
- All construction must be completed per approved plans and minimum code requirements

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- It is recommended that you keep your approved building plans for future additions or alterations.
- All pages of engineered plans, calculations, specifications, details, etc., shall be signed (wet signature) by the engineer or architect and shall show an up-to-date California stamp of his/her seal or his/her registration number.
- Plan Review and Permit fees quoted over the phone or at the counter are **estimated** and **approximate**.
- Fee estimates for the School District and Fire Districts must be obtained from those agencies.
- All other agency approvals and signatures are required prior to final occupancy approval.
- Please follow these instructions when preparing plans for a permit. This is necessary in order to provide uniformity in filing and future reference to plan documents, and to provide a more effective and efficient building inspection service. Deviations may be accepted for unusual circumstances.

Licensed Architect or Licensed Engineer:

If construction deviates from conventional light frame construction requirements for wood frame construction, plans must be prepared by a licensed architect or registered engineer. The documents prepared shall bear the stamp and original signature of the licensee who is responsible for their preparation.

ENGINEERING:

Engineering is required on all steel frame, concrete buildings and concrete or concrete block walls over four (4) feet high (measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall). Front page of engineering shall contain all design criteria. All call outs shall be detailed on the plans (beams, hold-downs, connections, retaining walls, shear panels, etc.). All engineering submitted requires the stamp and wet signature of the California licensed architect or registered engineer on all pages of the plans.

WHO MAY DRAW PLANS:

Individuals (owners) may prepare plans for the following:

- Single family dwelling of light wood frame conventional construction, not more than two stories and basement in height.

- Multiple dwellings containing no more than four (4) dwellings, of light wood frame conventional construction not more than two (2) stories and basement in height.
- Garages, patio covers, decks or other structures appurtenant to buildings described above.
- Agricultural buildings of conventional light wood frame construction.

DRIVEWAY/GRADING:

See [“Driveway Construction Standards” handout](#).

ENCROACHMENT PERMIT:

An encroachment permit is required when the driveway encroaches onto a county-maintained road. Contact the Department of Public Works for this permit and bring the receipt to the building department prior to issuance.

SEPTIC PERMIT AND WATER SUPPLY:

Proof of issued septic permit and water supply from the Environment Health Department is required prior to issuance of a new residence permit. You must apply for Environmental Health approval through that department. Concurrent permit applications are recommended.

ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS:

Building plans and site plans require the same information as a new building.

SNOWLOAD:

Nevada County is a declared snow area. Snow loads vary throughout the county. To obtain a snow load, please supply the building department with your Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN) or go to <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/45d30af79b1e45f792844b897a45131a>. All snow loads over 70-psf ground snow load will require engineering design, signature and approval.

EXEMPTED WORK: Section 14.02.050, Land Use and Development Code, Work Exempt from a Permit **A Building Permit shall not be required for the following:**

- One-story detached accessory structures without electrical, mechanical or plumbing not intended for habitation provided the projected floor area does not exceed 200 square feet, with a maximum of 2 (two) foot eaves. One structure per parcel. Must meet setbacks.
- Residential playground equipment
- Masonry walls, which are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- Detached trellis or arbor **accessory** (snow load not required) to single family residential property provided the projected roof area does not exceed 200 square feet.
- For other exemptions see the 2022 California Residential Code and/or Building Department staff member.

Site plan review and a letter of exemption issued by the Building & Planning Departments required for the following: Agriculture structures, not intended for habitation, **accessory** to residential property in zoning districts “AG”, “AE”, “RA”, “FR”, and “TPZ”, that meet all the following conditions:

- Not a place of employment where agricultural products are processed, treated, or packaged, nor shall it be a place used by the public.
- Of simple construction using conventional construction methods or specifically approved manufactured structures (concrete, steel frame, masonry and other technologies that generally require engineering are not exempt).

- Structures must meet the following limits:
 - **POLE BARNs:** Limited in size to **1,000** square feet maximum. One pole barn per parcel or per 20 acres. Open from ground to eaves on all sides. Distance to other structures must be equal to its height, minimum of 20 feet. Minimum of 100 feet from property line.
 - **SHADE STRUCTURES:** Cover limited to woven shade fabric.
 - **ANIMAL HUSBANDRY BARNs:** Limited in size to **400** square feet maximum. One structure per parcel or per 5 acres. Single wall construction, dirt or gravel floor. Minimum 10 foot distance from other structures, 40 feet from property line.
 - **PUMP HOUSES:** Limited in size to **100** square feet. Meet setbacks.
 - **GREENHOUSES:** Limited in size to **400** square feet. One structure per parcel or per 10 acres. Wood or PVC construction with plastic or fiberglass cover; dirt or gravel floor. Meet setbacks.
 - **STORAGE CONTAINERS:** Limited in size to 320sqft. One container per parcel or 5 acres. Container is used for light nonhazardous agricultural storage and shall not be structurally modified or have any electrical, mechanical or plumbing utilities.
 - **HIGH/LOW TUNNEL GREENHOUSES MEETING THE FOLLOWING CRITERION:**
 - ***This exemption allows for employees if structure is used for cultivation only***
 - Easily moveable
 - Constructed of metal or plastic tubing and covered with agricultural cloth, plastic film, or shade screening.
 - Exits are in compliance with the most recently adopted editions of the California Building and Fire Codes.
 - Structures meet vegetation management clearance requirements in accordance with the most recently adopted edition of the California Fire Code and Public Resource Code Section 4291.
 - Setbacks and height limitations in accordance with Chapter II of the Nevada County Land Use and Development Code.
 - i) Parcels 3 acres or greater in size shall meet the following size and setback standards:
 - 3,600sqft per acre maximum
 - 35ft in width maximum
 - One story
 - 5 feet separation between structures minimum
 - Clustering of structures is allowed
 - ii) Parcels less than 3 acres in size shall meet the following size and setback standards:
 - 3,600sqft maximum
 - 35ft in width maximum
 - One story
 - 5ft separation between structures minimum
 - All structures require site plan review and approval and letter of exemption issued by the Building Official and Planning Director.

PROPERTY TAXES: Construction and some miscellaneous improvements will result in a supplemental tax bill

for the change in value for the fiscal year in which the improvement is completed. Speculation builders should request “claim for Builders Exemption.” Questions pertaining to value may be directed to the Assessor’s Office at (530) 265-1232.

OWNER/BUILDERS: May perform their own work without workmen’s compensation insurance; they must perform the work themselves or with their immediate family (no wages or contracts are allowed), or they may also contract with licensed contractors.

With workmen’s compensation insurance (proof of insurance required), an owner/builder may hire by the hour, contract with licensed contractors, or contract with unlicensed persons for up to \$500.00. Violation of this law may result in the revoking of a permit and substantial penalties.

OWNER/BUILDER AGENTS: May be required to have a letter specifically authorizing permit application, and a completed “owner-builder verification” form

SMOKE/CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS: In new construction, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are required as indicated in 2025 California Residential Code.

In residential additions, alterations or repairs (for which a permit is required) smoke detectors are required to be in sleeping rooms, halls and/or stairways serving sleeping rooms and on every level. Carbon monoxide detectors are required in halls/room serving sleeping rooms and on over level. (Carbon monoxide detectors are not required if you do not have any gas appliances or an attached garage.)

JOB SITE SANITATION: Both County Ordinance and the California Health and Safety Code requires that approved water closets be provided at all construction sites, for obvious reasons. A minimum of one (1) water closet is required for every 20 employees.

The water closet will normally be a patented chemical-type toilet with routine servicing by a septic pumper licensed to operate within Nevada County. It must be located within reasonable distance to all persons at the job site. No permit is required for this type of toilet facility.

The building inspector will check for chemical toilets during job site inspections. Lack of compliance will result in referral to the Environmental Health Department for follow-up enforcement action. This includes monetary penalties beginning at \$100 per day per violation plus reimbursement for staff time utilized in the abatement of the violation at the department hourly rate approved by the Nevada County Board of Supervisors.

Address & Street Names: All projects for which a permit has been issued are required to have a street address posted. This address must be visible from the street and also at the building if there are multiple buildings onsite. The address numerals must be a minimum 4” in height with a minimum ½” stroke width.

The address must be posted prior to scheduling for an inspection. You will be charged a re-inspection fee in the event the inspector cannot find your project location due to an address not being posted.

Inspection Requests:

Inspections are performed Monday-Friday

Truckee area inspections are scheduled on TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS ONLY

Inspections are required to be scheduled online at

<https://permits.nevadacountyca.gov/citizenaccess/Cap/CapHome.aspx?module=Building>

Inspections can be scheduled 24/7. If you would like a next day inspection, the online request shall be completed by 12:00am the day before your inspection request. Best practice is to schedule inspections several days in advance to ensure your inspection date as some days fill up quickly. Inspections can be scheduled as much as 15 days in advance. Make sure to leave gate codes or any special instructions with your appointment request so the inspector can do their best to accommodate your specific need.

Please call the Building Department at (530) 265-1222 to cancel an inspection before 8:30am. A reinspection fee will be charged if the project is not ready for a scheduled inspection.

Only permits in good standing will receive inspections; re-inspection fees must be paid prior to scheduling your next inspection.

CHANGES IN WORK: Plans must be resubmitted to the Building Department for approval. Some changes may require a new permit. Minor changes may be field revised/approved. A fee based on our current plan review hourly rate is due for each change. Two (2) sets of revised plans shall be submitted to the Building Department for review and approved prior to inspection of revised work OR if plans were submitted digitally, changes can be uploaded to the portal along with an explanation of the revisions or changes that were made.

REFUND OF FEES: Refunds will be made on basic plan check or inspection fees. Administration and archiving fees are non-refundable. Plan check fees will be refunded if examination of plans has not begun. Inspection fees will be refunded on projects if construction has not begun and if no inspections have been made. See our refund policy on our refund request form for complete refund information. "As-Built" building permits may not be voided and fees will not be refunded.

Please call or visit the Building Department for further assistance. Informational handouts, applications, etc. are available at the Building Department or on our website at

<https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/1114/Building-Department>

Be sure that if you are building a spec house or house for sale that you complete the "Claim for Builder's Exemption Form" and file the form with the Assessor's office within 30 days from the start of construction.