

Lewis County Community Development

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BUILDING PERMIT HANDOUT

Building permits are required in Lewis County, Washington. Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure (including decks) must obtain the required permit. Failure to obtain a required permit may result in enforcement action(s) being taken by Lewis County.

Building Code

The 2021 Edition of the various International Codes were adopted by Lewis County on May 6, 2025 becoming effective June 1, 2025.

Exemptions

- Work exempt from permit includes (but not limited to):
- One-story detached accessory structures, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (residential) and 120 square feet (non-residential or commercial). **Not to include habitable space.**
- Fences not over 7 feet high.
- Retaining walls not over 4 feet in height measured from bottom of footing to top of wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
- Sidewalks and driveways. (Fill/Grade permit may be required for a driveway).
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertop and similar finish work.
- Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
- Swings and other playground equipment (residential only).
- Window awnings (residential only) supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes and not including service systems (non-residential only).
- Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height (non-residential only).
- Uncovered decks, less than 30" above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling, and less than 200 square feet and does not serve the exit door required by code.

The listing above is not a complete list of all exemptions. For the complete listing refer to the 2018 International Building Code 105.2 for exemptions for commercial use and to the 2018 International Residential Code 105.2 for exemptions for residential use.

Applying for a permit

Prior to submitting a building permit, a Master Site Review is required to be approved. The Master Site Review reviews the proposal in relation to zoning regulations and the critical areas ordinance. See the Site Plan Requirements Checklist and Master Site Review application for more information.

After submittal

Once the Master Site Review is approved, the building plans can be submitted. If the building will be connecting to a private well, a well report will be required (well log or flow test results showing gallons per minute the well produces). After submittal, the permit center will forward the information to the building department to review the building plans. Information and permit applications may also be forwarded to several agencies/departments for their review/approval depending on the scope of the project (i.e., Environmental Health). Generally, two (2) to four (4) weeks will be required for issuance of single-family residential use permits (home, storage building, garage, etc.). Commercial or industrial buildings, and multi-family residential use permits may require a minimum of four (4) weeks depending on the project and scope of reviews involved. However, during the peak building season (May thru October) the processing time for all permits can take much longer. It is recommended you submit your permit applications as early as possible to ensure you have an approved permit when you are ready to begin construction.

Expiration

Permits are valid for 180 days (6 months) after date of issuance and remain valid for 180 days after each inspection. The Lewis County Building Official may grant an extension. Requests for extensions must be made prior to the date of expiration of any permit.

Requirements for Building Plans

The construction plans will be reviewed for compliance with current building codes. Submittal of one complete set of building plans, to include:

- Foundation plan: Show size, materials and reinforcement (re-bar or steel, mud sill, j-bolts, etc.).
- Floor plan of each floor: Show all plumbing fixtures, and heating system locations. Include all door and window sizes on the plan. Include total square footage for each floor. The use of each room also needs to be labeled.
- Wall cross section(s) to show details of construction.
- Exterior elevations (all sides) to include windows/doors.
- Roof plan.
- Architect's name, address, and phone number (if applicable).

Any additions require a set of plans showing the existing layout of the structure in addition to the constructions plans. Additional fees may apply if the set of plans do not meet this criteria. All plans need to be legible.

Electrical Permit

All electrical permits and inspections are obtained through the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, Electrical Inspection Division.

Engineering

- The Building Official may require plans, computations and specifications to be prepared and designed by an engineer or architect licensed by the State of Washington
- All commercial projects require a Washington State licensed architect or engineer.
- Residences or accessory buildings (garage, storage, etc.) with a wall height 14 foot eve height or taller must be reviewed and stamped by a licensed structural engineer.
- Building with a roof clear span of 40' must be prepared (or reviewed) and stamped by a licensed structural engineer.
- Pole buildings with a floor area of 3000 sq ft or greater.

Requirements Prior to Final Inspection for a Single Family Residence

- Septic system final approved (As-Built and/or installers checklist submitted).
- Road approach constructed and final approved.
- A current satisfactory bacteria water test result (completed within the last year) and a nitrates water test result will need to be submitted.
- Any other conditions listed on the Building Permit or Inspection Record must be met prior to scheduling a final inspection
- Any associated permits must be approved

Setback from Property Lines

Residential Setback:

From County Road, 25 feet from right of way (minimum of 55 feet from centerline).

Front, 0 feet from private right of way easement

Side, 5 feet from property line

Rear, 15 feet from property line

Commercial Setback:

Front, As defined in Chapter 15.15 LCC

Side, 10 feet from property line

Rear, 0 feet, except 25 feet from property line when abutting a residential zone.

Industrial Setback:

Front, 10 feet from right of way

Side, 10 feet from property line

Rear, 0 feet, except 50 feet from property line when abutting a residential zone.

Height Limits

Residential, 35 feet

Commercial, 50 feet, except 35 feet when abutting (or within 50 feet of) a residential zone

Industrial, 50 feet plus one foot for every foot from property lines

Agriculture, resource, communication, and public utility uses, none

Cell Towers

150 feet in rural areas

120 feet in urban non-residential and non-school areas

85 feet in urban residential and school areas

Wind Load Requirements

Basic Wind Speed is 85 miles per hour, with a 110 mile per hour 3 second gust. The exposure is determined by the following definitions: Exposure B has terrain with buildings, forest, or surface irregularities, covering at least 20 percent of the ground level area extending one mile or more from the site.

Exposure C has terrain that is flat and generally open, extending one-half mile or more from the site in any full quadrant.

Note: Lewis County is within Seismic D-1

Snow Load Requirements

These requirements have been determined by the Building Official based on local conditions and the Second Edition of the Snow Load Analysis for Washington published in July 1995, by the Structural Engineers Association of Washington. Contact the Building Official for more information.

City Limits or Town of	Actual Elevation	Minimum Roof Snow Load (PSF) – With a 4/12 or greater pitch
Centralia	189	25
Chehalis	226	25
Mineral	*1770	(Consult Building Official)
Morton	940	45
Mossyrock	698	30
Onalaska	505	25
Packwood	*1051	(Consult Building Official)
Pe Ell	412	30
Randle	880	(Consult Building Official)
Toledo	110	25
Vader	175	25
Ashford (Paradise Estates)	*1770	(Consult Building Official)
White Pass	*4600	(Consult Building Official)
Burnt Ridge	*1100	(Consult Building Official)

* For non-residential structures, elevations 1000 feet or over have a frost depth of 18 inches minimum from finish grade to the bottom of the footing. Any elevation less than 1000 feet will have a frost depth of 12 inches. Residential structures will have a frost depth of 12 inches minimum countywide. **The Building department will assist you with the calculations for snow load if the actual elevation is known.**