

**Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)**

900 Oakesdale Avenue Southwest • Renton, Washington 98057-5212 • 206-296-6600 • TTY Relay: 711

## Residential Building Permit Process

- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** •

*Visit the DDES Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

**DDES Customer  
Information Bulletin #****12**

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

This bulletin describes the process for obtaining a Residential Building Permit and Building Inspections from the King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES). The general process is illustrated in the flow chart on the following page, and the steps are outlined in more detail throughout this bulletin. The review process may require a slight variation in these steps, depending on project scope and site conditions. Customers are encouraged to contract with an engineer or builder who is familiar with King County requirements. For additional information, see Bulletin 6, *Working with Contractors*.

DDES residential permits do not include plumbing, gas piping or electrical. Permits for plumbing and gas piping are issued by the Environmental Health Division of Public Health--Seattle & King County (206-296-4932). Electrical permits are issued by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Please contact the following locations for more information:

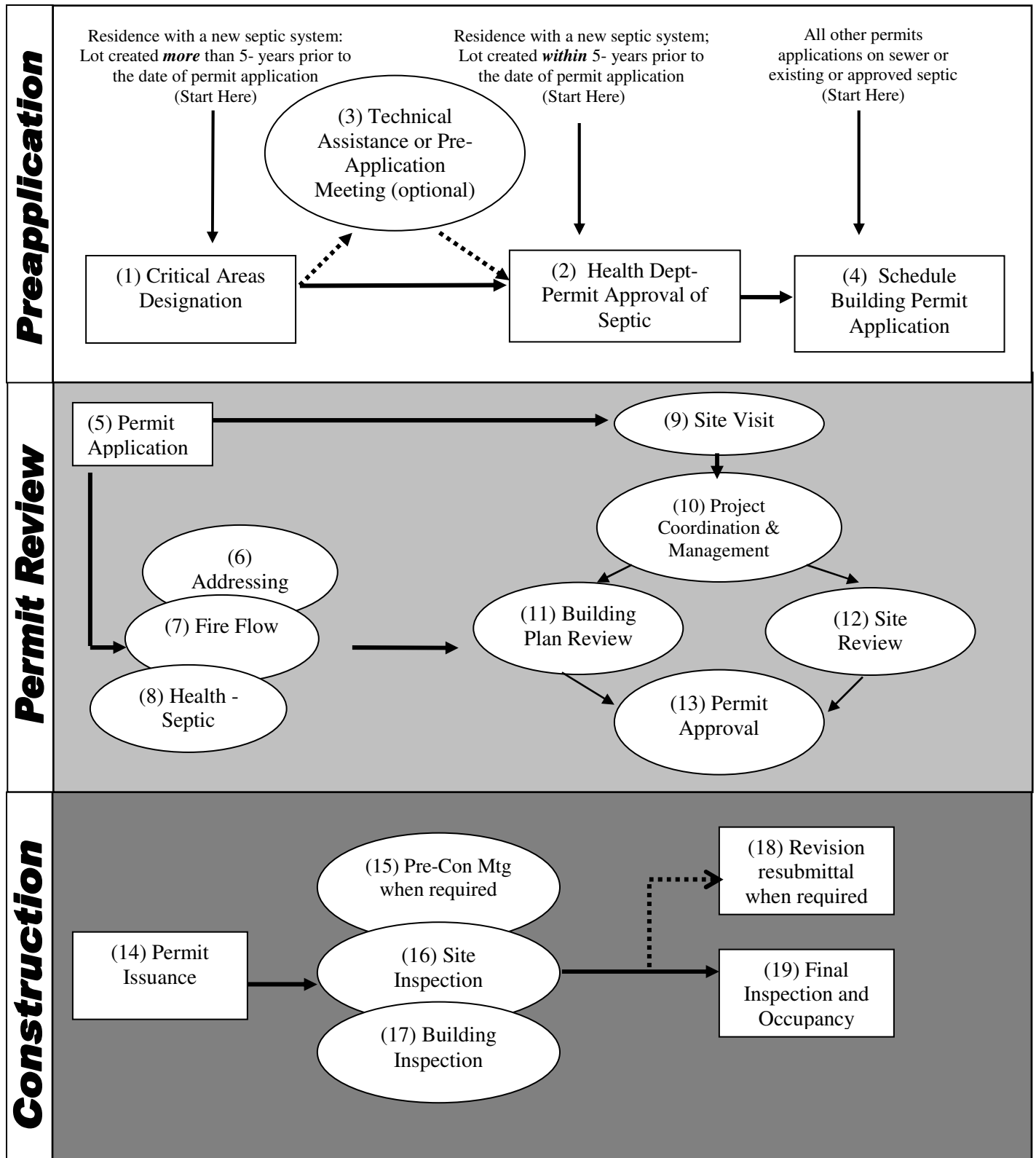
- North of Renton-Maple Valley Highway - Bellevue Office, Electrical Permits, (425-990-1400);
- South of Renton-Maple Valley Highway - Tukwila Office, Electrical Permits, (206-835-1198).

Before submitting an application, please note this recommendation:

- **Review Bulletin 9, *Obtaining a Residential Building Permit: Submittal Requirements*.** Look through the permit requirements listed in this bulletin and obtain the necessary permit application forms from the Permit Center at DDES. Forms are also available via the DDES Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) and by calling DDES customer service at 206-296-6600.

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

This flow chart represents a typical residential building permit process for a new house. The numbers in each of the boxes correspond to detailed information provided in this bulletin.



### 1. Critical Areas Designation (CAD)

DDES has established a procedure by which a property owner may request a *Designation of Critical Areas*. A CAD is required if the proposed design includes a new on-site sewage system (septic). This allows DDES to designate the presence, type, and location of critical areas on a particular property. *Critical Area Designations* are available for streams, wetlands, coal mine hazard areas, landslide hazard areas, and steep slopes.

Once completed, the *Designation of Critical Areas* is valid for two years and used by DDES during review of permit applications on the property.

If a customer applies for a development permit after the two-year period has elapsed, DDES will still refer to the original Critical Areas Designation Report. However, a field visit will be required to ensure that site conditions have not changed. If site conditions have changed, observations made during the subsequent field visit will take precedence over those described in the Critical Areas Designation.

For additional information about the Critical Area Designation process, please refer to DDES Bulletin #21.

### 2. Health Department – Septic System Approval

For lots not served by sewers, an approved septic design from King County Health Department is required prior to submitting a building permit application. Health Department staff also review applications for all remodels, additions, and detached structures on any land served by a septic system, ensuring that the system is adequate and will not be impacted by the new construction. Health Department review for additions, remodels and accessory buildings do not require pre-approval from King County Health. Please review the King County Health application forms available on DDES Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) for more information.

### 3. Technical Assistance and Pre-application Meetings

After reviewing the applicable bulletins, information forms/instructions and Web site resources, customers may have additional questions regarding a proposed design and the permit process. DDES offers several methods of assistance prior to permit submittal.

These resources include:

- General assistance by the Permit Center intake staff for walk-in customers provided throughout the day.
- Technical assistance from the various DDES review disciplines as a walk-in service at the DDES office. Please check the Web for available times or call the general information number at 206-296-6600.
- Pre-application consultation meetings for more in-depth services and complex projects. Please see the pre-application information form on the Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

### 4. Appointment Scheduling

All building and land use permit application are scheduled through the DDES Permit Center appointment desk. By reserving an appointment you can usually be immediately given help when you arrive. Some minor permits do not require an appointment; please contact us regarding those limited permits. To schedule an appointment please call the appointment hotline message center at 206-296-6797 and request the type of permit you would like to obtain, along with your name and contact number.

## 5. Permit Application Submittal Appointment

As previously mentioned, this is when the permit customer formally submits the permit application. Customers will meet with a Permit Review Coordinator who will review the application package. Please review Bulletin #9 for minimum permit application requirements. A plan reviewer may also be consulted to determine if the proposal is adequate to accept for review. Please be prepared to address any questions regarding the proposed project. Your preliminary permit fees will be calculated and the minimum permit application fee is due at this time.

Either during or following your appointment, the Permit Review Coordinator will complete the initial review of your application and determine if it is “complete”. If the application is deemed complete, it will be vested and reviewed to the codes in effect at the time of application. If the application is incomplete, the customer is notified of the missing information. The Permit Review Coordinator will also identify any additional information required prior to processing or approving and determining the appropriate routing system.

Applications are accepted by appointment only and all application materials must be complete at the time of submittal. Please see step 4, Appointment Scheduling.

## 6. Addressing

During the application process, the permit site will be assigned a street address. This will be the official site address. Please do not use any other address from any other document. This is critical for fire, life, and safety services. If it appears that an error was made, contact the King County DDES Address Information Line at 206-296-6628.

## 7. Fire Flow

After permit intake, a site plan and particulars about the proposed building site will be sent to the Fire Marshal’s Office at the King County DDES for review. Specifically, water availability and fire road access will be reviewed to determine whether the site is adequately served, or if a fire sprinkler system is required.

## 8. Health Department

This review is required for remodels, additions, decks and accessory buildings when the site is served by a septic system.

- For new houses on septic, pre-approval is required (see item #1).
- For sites served by sewers and certain minor remodels, this review is not required.

## 9. Site Visit

DDES staff with expertise in drainage, engineering and critical areas perform a site visit of the subject property to determine if additional site reviews are required. Based on this site visit, the application may be approved without further site requirements, conditionally approved with site requirements or, put on hold pending the submittal of additional information. If additional information is required, formal correspondence will be sent to the applicant.

## 10. Project Coordination & Management

An evaluation of the site conditions and findings will be made following the site visit. Staff will determine which site reviews will be required and the appropriate fee for those reviews. If it is determined that your project does not require project management, you will receive a written notification from DDES regarding any additional reviews that will be required and the associated fees. A determination is also made if the project is considered complex and a project manager should be assigned to your permit. The project manager monitors permit application progress and fees to ensure accountability.

## 11. Building Plans Review

A Plans Examination Engineer reviews all drawings to ensure that they meet current building, mechanical, and energy codes. The examiner may ask for technical information or supplementary drawings in an effort to complete the review. If required, the Engineer will attach a correction sheet to the approved plans.

## 12. Site Review

Site reviews are determined upon completion of the site visit by DDES staff. Site reviews may include, but are not limited to, drainage, access, wetland, geotechnical, streams, FEMA flood hazard and wildlife protection. Site reviews may involve the review and approval of delineations, studies and other technical analysis by licensed professionals.

## 13. Critical Areas Notice on Title

If critical areas exist on the site, landowners will be required to file a notice on the title to their property with the King County Records and Licensing Services Division. The Critical Areas Notice on Title states that critical areas and their associated buffers are present on the property, that the King County Critical Areas Ordinance Regulations apply, and that these regulations may limit development actions in the critical areas and in the buffers. Landowners must provide copies of the recorded documents to King County DDES before any development permits can be issued for the site. A small fee may be required for recording these documents.

## 14. Permit Approval and Issuance

Applicants will be notified via US mail when the permit has been approved. The notification will include information regarding any outstanding fees due and all other requirements that may need to be met prior to issuance. Once all of the requirements have been met, your permit may be picked up at DDES in addition to the approved plans.

## 15. General Inspection Requirements and Information

The Department's Building Inspection Section (BIS) provides building and site inspections for single-family residential projects. Inspectors are available from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and can be reached at 206-296-6630. BIS staff can be reached during normal business hours to answer building inspection questions. It is the responsibility of the applicant and contractor to make inspection requests at the appropriate time and have the approved plans and official permit card on the job site and all required inspection approvals.

### Inspection Requests:

Building Inspections: For building and new construction fire inspections in unincorporated King County, requests can be made 24 hours a day, 7 days per week either online at <http://inspections.kingcounty.gov> or by calling the automated 24-hour inspection request line at 1-888-546-7728. Inspection requests received before 3:00 p.m. on a workday will be scheduled for inspection the following workday. Go to inspections on the DDES Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits) for more information.

Plumbing Inspections: The King County Health Department performs inspections for plumbing, septic system and wells. Contact 206-206-4932 to request these inspections.

Electrical Inspections: The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Electrical Division perform electrical inspections for King County permitted projects. Contact the Bellevue L&I Office at 425-990-1400 or the Tukwila Office at 206-835-1111 to request an electrical inspection.

**All work must be in accordance with the approved plans and permit conditions.**

## 15. Pre-Construction Conference

Some projects have significant site and building concerns such as wetlands, shorelines, floodplain, geotechnical, steep-slope, erosion hazard, drainage, excavation, near a property line, etc. A pre-construction conference may be required to address these issues with DDES staff prior to the start of construction. A notice and condition will be added to your permit package if a pre-construction conference is required. Please allow up to two working days after a pre-construction meeting is requested for the meeting to be scheduled.

## 16. Site Inspections

**Erosion and Sedimentation Control (ESC)**: All ESC measures must be installed when the site is cleared. ESC measures are identified in a 'Notice to Customers' form which is included your permit package. This notice is also available at the DDES Permit Center and can be accessed via the DDES Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits). ESC measures must be maintained throughout construction. ESC measures are verified at the first foundation inspection and monitored during all subsequent inspections.

**Drainage Inspections**: The King County Surface Water Design Manual (KCSWD) required that drainage facilities for single family residential construction be installed in accordance with small project best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs include infiltration, dispersal and routing surface water to an approved facility. Inspections for drainage facilities may be combined with other inspections or require a separate inspection.

## 17. Building Inspections

**Foundation Inspection**: The foundation inspection occurs after the building pad excavation has taken place. For concrete foundations, forms and reinforcing steel must be in place. Inspection approval is required prior to placement of concrete. For pole structures, the holes must be excavated and cleaned out. For pile foundations, special inspection by an approved agency is usually required. At the foundation inspection, inspectors check building placement per the approved plan, setbacks (from property lines, easements, critical areas and buffers, etc.), soil conditions, ESC, critical areas requirements, forms and reinforcing steel, hold downs and special frame anchors, and any other requirements specified in the approved plans and permit conditions.

**Underfloor Inspection**: The underfloor inspection is intended for structures with crawlspaces. This inspection occurs when all girder beams, posts, joists, piers and hold-downs are installed and prior to floor sheathing attachment. Inspectors check the size and location of floor framing and lateral resistance elements for conformance with the approved plan.

**Shear Wall Inspection**: Shear wall inspections are necessary when a specific structural design for lateral restraint panels is required in the approved plans. The inspection occurs when the framing, hold downs, sheathing, attachment and strapping are in place in accordance with the approved plans. Elements of shear panels should be left exposed until inspected and approved.

**Framing Cover Inspection:** The framing cover inspection occurs when construction of the building framing is complete, plumbing rough-in is completed and approved, electrical rough-in is completed and approved, and the windows and roofing have been installed. Insulation should not be installed at the first framing inspection. Inspectors verify that structural, ordinance and life safety requirements visible at the framing inspection are in conformance with the approved plans. A required fire sprinkler system requires rough-in approval prior to framing cover approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must be received and approved for elevation requirements prior to framing cover approval.

**Energy Inspections:** Elements of energy inspections include foundation wall and slab insulation; infiltration barriers; wall, ceiling and under floor insulation; windows; gasketing; and whole house fans. Inspectors provide spot check inspections of these elements at the appropriate inspection for conformance with the approved plans and energy code.

## 18. Revision Resubmittal

Construction of the building and site improvement are required to be completed in accordance with the approved permit, plans and conditions. If changes are required to the design following permit issuance, the modifications need to be approved separately by DDES. Minor field changes should be discussed with your building inspector to determine how and if the change is allowed. Major modifications will typically require submitting a revision permit to Permit Center. A revision permit number is assigned and the revisions are routed to the appropriate review disciplines.

## 19. Final Inspection and Occupancy

**Final Inspection:** The final inspection occurs when all work required by the approved plans and permit conditions and applicable codes has been completed. Building elements inspected at the final inspection include the occupancy separation between the house and attached garage, egress requirements, (including stairs, handrails, guardrails, ramps, porches, doors and landings), smoke alarms, decks, etc. Site elements inspected at the final inspection include impervious surface, drainage facilities, final site stabilization and completion of all sensitive/critical areas requirements and mitigation including Final plumbing inspection approval and approval of septic system as-builts are required. A required fire sprinkler system or fire access mitigation must have final inspection approval. A required FEMA Flood Elevation Certificate must have final approval by DDES.

**Temporary Occupancy:** Temporary occupancy may be approved by the building inspector if there are minor corrections noted at the final inspection. Temporary occupancy will not be approved for a building or portions of a building if there are outstanding life safety requirements that have not been mitigated in an approved manner. Temporary occupancy also will not be approved if there are outstanding site issues that create an environmental hazard, a drainage or erosion hazard and/or a traffic hazard. All outstanding fees due to DDES must be paid prior to temporary occupancy approval.

**Final Certificate of Occupancy (CO):** A Final CO will be issued upon completion of all requirements of the approved plans, permit conditions, approval of related ancillary permits and approval from other applicable agencies. All outstanding fees due to DDES must be paid prior to issuance of the Final CO. For single-family residential projects, the inspection record card at the job site with the final inspection block signed by the building inspector.

**Permit Extension:** A King County building permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance. A permit extension is required if all required work is not completed by permit expiration. Permit applicants are notified of the pending permit expiration 30 days prior to the expiration if the permit has not received final inspection approval by that time. Permit extensions will be granted in accordance with King County Code upon payment of the appropriate fees. Contact the BIS at 206-296-6630 for additional information about the permit extension process.

Note: The most important thing customers can do to ensure that applications are reviewed without delay is to submit complete and accurate information. Please take the time to review all applicable Customer Information Bulletins, all of which are available via the DDES Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits), by calling DDES customer service at 206-296-6600, and in the DDES Permit Center located at 900 Oakesdale Ave. S.W., Renton, WA, 98057.

### Other Bulletins and Telephone Numbers That May Be Helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 3	Demolition Permits for Commercial and Residential Structures
Bulletin 4	Damage Repairs
Bulletin 6	Working with Contractors
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-Family Building Permits
Bulletin 9	Obtaining a Residential Building Permit
Bulletin 10	Residential Building On or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 11	Street Addresses and Road Names
Bulletin 13	Fire System Permits
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 23	Certified Wood Stoves
Bulletin 39	Private Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems

DDES bulletins are available via the department Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

### Other Telephone Numbers That May Be Helpful:

206-296-6600	DDES Customer Service / Customer Information Line
206-296-6797	DDES Permit Center Appointment Desk
206-296-6600	DDES Site Development Services Section
206-296-6628	DDES Address Information Line
206-296-6630	DDES Building Inspection Section
206-296-6696	DDES Records Center



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.