



CITY of  
**GENESEO**

Where the *future* grows.

**City Of Geneseo, Illinois  
Information Regarding  
Building Construction, Renovations,  
and Permitting.**

This document serves as an introduction to the permitting requirements and policies of the City of Geneseo. It is not comprehensive and is not intended to substitute for the regulations and codes followed by the city.

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## 1. Why should I get a permit?

There are many important reasons to obtain the required permit(s) and to obtain the required inspections for your project.

- Protects property value - Your home or business is an investment. If your project does not comply with the codes and standards adopted by your community, the value of your investment could be reduced.
- Saves money - Property insurance may not cover work or damages caused by work done without permits and inspections.
- Makes selling property easier - When property is sold through a multiple-listing association, the owner must disclose any improvements or repairs made and if permits and inspections were obtained. Many financial institutions will not finance a purchase without proof of a final inspection. If you decide to sell a home or building that has had modifications without a permit, you may be required to tear down the addition, leave it unoccupied, or do costly repairs.
- Improves safety - The permit review and inspections process' are designed to ensure that all construction is safe. By following code guidelines, your completed project will meet minimum standards of safety and will be less likely to cause injury to you, your family, your friends, or future occupants. Mandatory inspections complement the contractor's experience and act as a system of checks and balances resulting in a safer project.
- It's the law - Work without a permit may be subject to removal or other costly remedies.

## 2. What activities require a building permit?

The Building Department reviews all construction to ensure that structures are built properly (i.e., “to Code”) and can be occupied safely for their intended purpose. A building permit must be obtained before beginning construction, alteration or extensive repairs, addition to, alteration of, or replacement or relocation of water supply, sewer, waste, vent or similar piping, electrical wiring, or other work for which a permit is required by the building department.

### *Work requiring permits includes:*

- Additions to buildings, including garages, porches, and decks
- Interior work that requires structural work.
- Finishing of basements.
- Sheds (including prefabricated sheds), barns, garages, greenhouses over 120 square feet.
- Inground and above ground pools – deeper than 18” and/or containing more than 5,000 gallons of water.
- Wood and gas stoves, fireplaces.
- Roofing, siding, and replacement windows.
- Signs
- Demolition
- Electrical service changes and repair, additional electrical work added.
- Plumbing adding new connections or openings.

### *The following building renovation activities do not require a building permit:*

- Kitchen cabinet replacement that does not require moving walls.
- Sheetrock and wall repair.
- Chimney liners
- Change of light fixtures and outlet updates
- New flooring
- Fences

**These lists are not all inclusive, and the Building Department should be contacted to confirm if your project requires permitting or other approvals.**

### 3. What activities require Zoning Approval?

Planning and Zoning regulate the activities allowed on your property and where the structures that contain these uses can be located. Construction, re-construction, extension, enlargement, moving, or altering any building or another structure and before the use or occupancy of any land, building, or other structures may require zoning approval and a building permit. In addition, change of use of a property (e.g., retail to a restaurant or residential to commercial) must go through the planning and zoning review and approval process.

We strongly recommend that you make an appointment with our office to discuss the zoning regulations for your site that may require a hearing before our zoning board.

### 4. What activities related to the Flood Plain require review and permits?

The Code of the City of Geneseo – Appendix “A” section 9-5-13 regulates activities proposed in the Flood Plain Overlay District. The City of Geneseo regulate all activity in any area that impacts or has the potential to impact or affect watercourses.

*Some of the activities that would be subject to review and approval are:*

- The storage, removal, or deposition of material,
- Any obstruction, construction, alteration or pollution of a flood plain or watercourse
- Any earth moving, filling, construction,
- Clear-cutting of trees,
- Discharging of waters, within the 150' upland areas require a review. The intent is to review the proposed activity and to apply only such restrictions as are needed to avoid adverse impacts in the inland wetlands, water courses, and surrounding properties. The restrictions are not intended to be exclusionary setbacks.

**This list is not all inclusive, and the Building Department should be contacted to confirm if your project requires permitting or other approvals.**

## 5. Do I need approvals from other departments?

All City Departments will participate in the review process and make comment accordingly.

In addition to building, planning and zoning approvals, the following may be required:

- On some large projects, the Building Inspector may require a plan review from the city's chosen Engineer or Architect at the builder's expense.
- City or State Fire Marshal approval may be required.
- Sewer and Water Department approval is required if the structure is on or will be connected to public sewers or may impact access to city infrastructure.
- Street Department approval is required for work affecting curbs, sidewalks, and for driveways connecting with the public right-of-way.
- Engineering approval is required for work affecting curbs, sidewalks, streets, and for driveways connecting with the public right-of-way or issues that affect flood plains and wetlands.
- Health Department approval is required for food establishments or connections to a septic tank. In addition, the Health Department must approve most projects on properties with a septic system if that project involves digging (e.g., footings for a deck) or will affect the load on the septic system (e.g., expansion of a home).

## 6. Who may apply for a permit?

Preferably the builder or contractor will be pulling the permits. A homeowner can pull the permits, just know that this transfers some of the liability of the project onto the homeowner. Proof of insurance and the correct license are required for a contractor to pull a permit.

## 7. Who can do the work?

A homeowner can perform his own work if he occupies the home and does not rent out any part of it. The homeowner is still required to get a permit and maintain residency in the home for 1 year past the completion date. With this exception, any individual doing permitted electrical or plumbing must be registered with the city of Geneseo. Using a licensed contractor provides protection to the homeowner from being charged for work and materials not provided. Materials and suppliers and subcontractors can place a lien on your property if they do not receive payment from your contractor. Proper licenses for those persons performing Plumbing, Roofing and Electrical are required and provide some assurance that they have adequate knowledge and training in those fields. Licensed electricians and plumbers are required to perform their trade work within commercial properties and rental properties.

## 8. What codes are used by the City of Geneseo?

Planning and Zoning is governed by The City of Geneseo Zoning Regulations.

Building Codes used by our Building Department are:

2012 International Building Code

2012 International Residential Code

2012 International Fire Code

2012 International Property Maintenance Code

2012 International Mechanical Code

2018 Life Safety Code – NFPA 101

2014 National Electric Code

2004 Illinois State Plumbing Code

The codes listed may contain references to other codes, have been supplemented or amended by the City of Geneseo and contain references to other applicable codes.

## 9. Are there any special issues I should be aware of related to Geneseo permits?

Generators:

Standby electric generators can provide you an extra sense of security in view of Illinois's unpredictable weather and the occasional resulting power outage. These are very rare in Geneseo with the city owning its own power company and employing our own linemen. However, even small, portable electric generators - if they're used improperly - can threaten your safety and the safety of power company linemen working on the electrical system. All generators should be installed by a licensed electrician and receive a permit.

Sheds:

Sheds and any other outbuildings (except treehouses) require approval from the city and must meet required setbacks for accessory structures (5' from property line and not over utility easements). A building permit is required for all accessory buildings over 120 square feet including prefab buildings. For installation of a shed, mechanical fasteners/anchors must be properly fastened to resist 110 miles per hour design wind loads.

#### Flood Hazard Zones:

Some of Geneseo's residential and commercial properties are subject to periodic flooding. If your property is located in a Flood Hazard Zone, special construction regulations may apply to eliminate possible loss of life and reduce property damage in case of a Flood.

#### Swimming Pools:

A permit is required for any 1&2 family swimming pools containing water over 18". Non-residential pool installations shall require both an IDPH and City permit. A site plan shall be submitted showing the pool size, location and setbacks. The pool shall be located in the rear yard, and pools may not be placed over an easement. The pool walls shall maintain minimum 5'-0" side and rear lot line setbacks. The pool shall be completely protected by a minimum 4'-0" fence, or if the sidewall of the pool is 48 inches or higher (non climbable sides), the access point is required to be protected. All gates that provide pool access shall be self-closing and lock from the poolside. Self-Contained pools are allowed providing the access point is protected as above or removed when the pool is not being used or tended. Pools shall be wired in accordance with the National Electrical Code.

#### Fences and Walls:

Rear and side yard fences not more than seven (7') feet in height are permitted in residential districts unless otherwise specified. Fences shall be allowed to be constructed on a lot line with decorative surface facing outward. If the lot line cannot be determined, the owner must pay for a survey. Line of sight clearances and setbacks are required for corner lots. Both street frontages with a designated view corridor required for maximum traffic visibility. Restrictions may exist for fences on yards abutting wetlands.

Finishing a basement or attic will require a permit for each trade performing work.

#### Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are required in all residential occupancies. A smoke detector is required within each bedroom, within 15' of the outside of the bedrooms and one on each level of the home including the basement and any finished attics. A carbon monoxide detector is required within 15' of the outside of all sleeping rooms. They may also be required in commercial and industrial structures.

Solar projects:

All solar projects require an electrical permit. Roof mounted solar projects will also require a building permit. An engineered review of the roof's structural integrity will need to be turned in with application. No solar panels can be installed over shingles over 1 year old. Contact the Director of Electrical Operations in reference to the interconnection agreement prior to purchasing a solar package.

**10. What work is exempt from permits?**

The following work does not require a building permit for one and two family residential dwellings only.

- Foundation repairs, except where the property is in a flood hazard zone.
- Gas fireplaces and wood fireplaces with a roof flue.
- Chimney liners.
- Change of light fixtures.
- New flooring.
- Building maintenance work.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work not involving structural changes or alterations.
- Swings, non-habitable tree houses and other playground equipment.

Electrical work:

A permit is not required for minor electrical repair work, including replacement of lamps and fuses or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

Gas work:

A permit is not required for:

- Portable heating or cooking appliances with a self-contained fuel supply.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

**11. What documents do I need to obtain a permit?**

Permit application, site plan for additions and accessory buildings/pools, blue prints, contractor registration and up to date insurance and licenses.

**12. How much will my permit cost?**

See building permit fee schedule.

**13. Where and when can I apply for a permit?**

The Geneseo City Hall is located at, 115 S. Oakwood Ave. Geneseo, IL 61254.

Normal business hours: Monday- Friday 8 AM – 4 PM.

If you are unable to come during these hours, you may apply online and pay with credit card over the phone.

**14. How long does it take to get a permit?**

The time required reviewing and issuing a permit varies considerably depending on the current workload in the department, the complexity of the project, and the number of questions that come up during our review. The present review process period is ten (10) business days for large projects and usually the same day or next business day on small projects. The best way to expedite your permit review is to make sure that the application is complete, and the plans fully represent compliance with our regulations and building codes.

**15. Once I receive a permit, do I need an inspection?**

Inspections are required at different times throughout the project.

Footing inspection, foundation wall inspection, precover inspections and final inspections.

Some additional inspections may be required for special projects.

Call WEEKDAYS 7:30-3:30

Rick Mills for building inspections @ 309-489-6555

Jordan Seibel for plumbing inspections @ 309-945-5059

Rick Preston for electrical inspections @ 309-489-6549

City Hall 309-944-6419