

PART ONE

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1–1 Welcome to the Division of Building Inspection

The Building Department is divided into two divisions. The Commercial Division, as its name implies, is responsible for all business properties and multiple family units. The Housing Division is responsible for residential properties, one and two families only. This divisional arrangement allows the Building Department to be more responsive to the needs of the homeowners. One inspector has been assigned to each of Lakewood’s four wards and three Code Compliance Specialists inspect on an ongoing basis the exterior of all one and two family dwelling units.

The Housing Division is charged with implementing and enforcing our City’s local codes regarding housing and building codes. They assist in establishing a minimum standard necessary to make all dwelling structures safe, sanitary, free from fire and health hazards, and fit for human habitation and beneficial to the public welfare. To accomplish this goal, the Housing Division conducts city wide inspections of all dwelling units. Commercial properties also are inspected. The most valuable asset of any city is its residential and commercial dwellings. To this end, the City of Lakewood asks for the cooperation and support of all its residents in this worthwhile program.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Main Building Department Telephone Number	(216) 529-6270
Building Department - Commercial Division	(216) 529-6278
Building Department - Residential Division	(216) 529-6285
Edward Fitzgerald Project Administrator for New Lakewood	(216) 529-6297
Charles Barrett Building Commissioner	(216) 529-6280
Jeff Fillar, Acting Assistant Building Commissioner Residential Division	(216) 529-6285
Daniel Russell, Assistant Building Commissioner Commercial Division	(216) 529-6279

Tips from the Division of Building Inspection

BE SURE

Decide what improvements and conveniences are most needed and desired for your enjoyment and better living.

TAX INCREASE

General maintenance and remodeling of rooms you are now using will *NOT* increase your taxes.

PRICE

Get two or three estimates from reputable contractors for your anticipated project. They should carefully estimate labor and material costs.

DON'T RUSH

Avoid snap judgments. Obtain references from neighbors who have selected other contractors and were pleased with their performance.

AGREEMENT

Your contractor should give you a written agreement on plans, specifications and costs.

HOME REMODELING

Homeowners who do their own remodeling must obtain permits required from the Building Department. Contractors are responsible for obtaining permits for work done for homeowners.

QUALIFICATIONS

Contact the Building Department to verify that your selected contractor is currently registered.

PERMIT RESPONSIBILITY

Person to whom a permit has been issued shall be responsible for installing all work to minimum code standards and in a good workmanlike manner.

BUILDING CODE

The purpose of the Regional Dwelling House Code and the 2000 International Residential Code (I.R.C.) is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property and the public welfare. Any and all planned improvements must follow this code. Copies of the current code are available at either of the Lakewood Public Libraries or in the Building Department at Lakewood City Hall.

Building Permit Requirements

PURPOSE:

The issuance of a permit notifies the local municipality that work is being performed and prompts an inspection to assure that minimum standards to safeguard life, limb, health, property and public welfare are maintained and followed.

WHEN REQUIRED:

Building permits shall be obtained before proceeding with any excavation, grading, construction, alteration, repair, moving or demolition of any dwelling or appurtenant structure. Separate permits shall also be obtained for electrical work, plumbing work, heating, air conditioning and all other equipment that are essential features in the use of the dwelling (or other structure). The following pages of this Guidebook list many types of repairs or improvements residents may be contemplating and lists information regarding permit requirements.

TO WHOM PERMITS ARE ISSUED:

Permits are issued to the person, owner or contractor who shall physically perform the work for which the permit was sought. Contractors shall have a valid and current registration before applying for a permit.

INSPECTIONS:

The person to whom a permit has been issued shall be responsible for requesting periodic inspections of work completed at each of the following stages of construction, before covering or concealing work, installation of footing drains, building drains and building sewers, completion of foundation and waterproofing, during framing of the superstructure, the completion of roughing in the plumbing, electrical wiring, gas piping, heating ducts or piping or other similar service installations, and before closing in all structural elements, and upon final completion of the structure.

PERMIT RESPONSIBILITY:

It shall be the responsibility of the person to whom a permit has been issued to comply with all applicable housing codes and to install such work in a quality and workmanlike manner.

WHERE PERMITS ARE OBTAINED:

Permits are obtained at the Building Department office at Lakewood City Hall, 12650 Detroit Avenue, lower level. Applications are accepted Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. No permits are issued between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m.

Registration of Contractors

CONTRACTORS REQUIREMENT:

An Ordinance was enacted in March of 1979 to require that contractors performing work in this City be first registered with the City of Lakewood's Building Department. This insures residents that their contractors are properly insured with the necessary contractor liability insurance in case of an on-the-job accident.

DEFINITION OF "CONTRACTOR": -

A person; corporation; partnership; firm; or other business association that either negotiates a written or oral contract and/or performs physical labor for consideration.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

All contractors engaged in the trade or occupation of building, constructing, altering, repairing, painting, moving, demolition, plastering, masonry work, roofing work, paving, fencing, landscaping, snow plowing, or any other similar type of work, shall duly register as a contractor.

All contractors engaged in performing work relative to the four safety mechanical trades, "electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning", shall be duly registered with the Building Department before performing this type of work.

LIABILITY:

All contractors shall carry current liability and property damage insurance and shall provide proof by furnishing a "Certificate of Insurance" naming the City of Lakewood as certificate holder (\$100,000/300,000 bodily injury and \$50,000 property damage). Insurance would provide for coverage in the case of an on-the-job personal injury or property damage.

CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY:

Contractors, who become registered in the City of Lakewood, shall warrant or be presumed to have warranted that all work performed and all materials to be supplied by contract are in compliance with all applicable ordinances of the City unless the contractor has actual knowledge of any deficiencies or noncompliance at the time the contract is entered into.

WHY...

... hire a REGISTERED Contractor?

The City of Lakewood requires that all construction and service contractors register with the Building Department annually. The purpose for the registration is to discourage contractors who have inadequate or no insurance from soliciting for and performing work within the City of Lakewood. This requirement is intended to protect you and the public from loss due to a contractor's liability. Further, upon registration, all contractors warrant that their work will comply with all applicable codes and ordinances whether or not the work performed requires a permit or an inspection.

... does the City require PERMITS?

The City of Lakewood requires permits for all structural alterations, including excavation, grading, building repair, moving and demolition, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work. Please turn to page three (3) for a complete listing of specific repairs that require a permit. Applying for a permit notifies the City that work is being planned so that the City may have the opportunity to communicate the requirements and restrictions of such plans. Issuance of a permit prompts an inspection of the work to assure that all codes and ordinances have been met. Remember, most of the codes that our inspectors enforce are there for YOUR safety.

... should I INSIST that my contractor be registered and/or obtain permits?

The City of Lakewood's Building Department is here to protect the safety and interest of all Lakewood citizens. If your contractor fails to register or obtain permits there is no opportunity for the building department to offer these protections.

Lakewood's Boards & Commission

Board of Zoning Code Appeals

As indicated throughout this Guidebook, many anticipated home improvements require drawings and plot plans to be submitted to the Building Department prior to obtaining a permit. The Building Department reviews the plans submitted to verify that the improvement is in compliance with the City of Lakewood's Zoning Code. The main purpose of a Zoning Code is to ensure good land use planning providing adequate open spaces for light and air, and to protect the character and value of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and public uses.

In some instances, the strict application of the Zoning Code may cause a practical difficulty or an unnecessary hardship which would deprive the property owner from reasonable use of his or her land or building. To this end, a variance may be sought by a proper appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The Board of Zoning Appeals consists of five members. Their regular meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held in the auditorium at Lakewood City Hall. All applications shall be submitted to the Building Department. It is recommended to submit them Prior To the application deadline, which is **NOON** (sharp) 14½ days prior to the scheduled meeting date. This application deadline will allow the Building Department to review the application for completeness. Please be prompt since late applications cannot be accepted. A filing fee is required.

Applications may be obtained at the office of the Building Department. Each application shall contain the following information:

1. Name of the applicant requesting a ruling.
2. Location of the property involved.
3. Character of the request or appeal.
4. Reason for submission to the Board.
5. Short statement of the facts.
6. Plot plan drawn to scale of the property involved showing location, size of structure, property line and building line.

At least three members of the Board must vote in favor of a request to obtain a variance. Requests that have been denied may be re-submitted to the Secretary of the Board within ten (10) days, in writing, specifying the reasons why a rehearing should be granted.

Board of Building Standards/ Architectural Board of Review

The Board of Building Standards consists of five members. Similar to the Board of Zoning Appeals, this Board's function is to listen to requests or appeals relative to Building Code Ordinances. Strict application of Building Codes may cause unnecessary and impractical hardships. For this purpose, the Board of Building Standards was created.

The Board also has the expertise to approve or disapprove new building products or new special methods of construction which are not considered conventional or recognized in the existing building codes.

Lakewood's Boards & Commission, continued

The Board of Building Standards also serves as an Architectural Board of Review. Acting in this capacity, the Board approves or disapproves architectural improvement plans for Lakewood private residences and commercial buildings. Some examples of projects requiring approval from the Architectural Board of Review are:

1. Any addition or alteration facing a public right-of-way.
2. Front porch alterations
3. New construction
4. Parking lot design

The Board meets on the second Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held in the auditorium at Lakewood City Hall. All applications shall be submitted to the Building Department. It is recommended to submit them Prior To the application deadline, which is **NOON** (sharp) 14½ days prior to the scheduled meeting date. This application deadline will allow the Building Department to review the application for completeness. A filing fee is required. Applications can be obtained at the office of the Building Department. Each application shall contain the following information.

1. Name of the applicant requesting a ruling.
2. Location of the property involved.
3. Character of the request or appeal.
4. Reason for submission to the Board.
5. Short statement of the facts.
6. Detailed drawing showing construction method involved in the appeal.
7. Any other prior approvals from any testing agencies.
8. Drawings of signage, or graphics, exterior lighting, landscaping.

NOTE: More information may be required pending the type of appeal.

Variations are granted when approved by at least three (3) members of the Board. Requests that are denied may be resubmitted to the Secretary of the Board within ten (10) days, in writing, specifying the reasons why a rehearing should be granted.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission reviews requests for lot consolidations, lot splits, major and minor sub-divisions, determination of similar and conditional use, Mixed Use Overlay-Districts and Planned Developments. The Commission also reviews and updates the Zoning Code and Lakewood's long-range plan the - **Lakewood Community Vision**. The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. for a work session and 7:30 p.m. for the regular meeting. There are seven members on the Planning Commission and they are appointed to a six-year term.

Lakewood Heritage Advisory Board

The Lakewood Heritage Advisory Board was established in 1995 to serve in an advisory capacity for the purpose of educating, informing, and making recommendations to City officials, departments, boards and commissions, and the community on matters relating to historic preservation. The volunteer Board members are available to provide advice concerning the maintenance, repair, and restoration of buildings in Lakewood.

A website of information is available at <http://www.lkwdpl.org/homepres>.