



Office of University Building Official

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Date: February 15, 2022

SUBJECT: Construction Permit Procedures & Forms

REFERENCES: Code of Virginia, §23-38.109

Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, 2018 edition, Section 108 DEB Notice 071414, Applicable Building Code for State-Owned Buildings and Structures

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for construction permits on University facilities and structures.

POLICY: All renovation and construction work on university buildings and structures shall be done in accordance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and other applicable codes, directives and standards.

PROCEDURES:

- A. All University projects will be reviewed and construction permits issued by the University Building Official in accordance with the USBC per the above referenced documents and this directive.
- B. The Code of Virginia §23-38.109 authorizes George Mason University (GMU) to designate its own building official to perform the duties of plan review, permitting, and inspections when applicable.
- C. Note that all projects reviewed are issued a specific project number until construction permit(s) required per the USBC are requested and approved by the University Building Official. Such projects must receive construction permits as applicable prior to commencement of work. Projects other than those in the "No Permit" category listed below in §D.3 shall require individual permit(s) issued by the University Building Official.

- D. Projects may be upgraded from a “No Permit Required” project to one requiring a building permit. The final decision regarding permits and upgrades required shall be made by the University Building Official.
- E. The USBC Section 108 governs what types of work require a permit. The following may be used:
1. Permits are required for:
 - Capital Projects
 - Construction or demolition of a building or structure.
 - Site/foundation/utility preparation for factory built or prefabricated structures
 - Change in building use or occupancy
 - Removal or cutting out a section of a structural member.
 - New/relocated/replaced/altered elevators and any work other than repair
 - Adding/removing HVAC, electrical, plumbing, gas, fire protection (sprinkler suppression, alarm) systems.
 - Projects involving the following:
 - Mechanical – alteration or relocation of the quantity or source of ventilation, exhaust, or combustion air; alteration or relocation of boilers, water heaters, pressure vessels, or refrigeration equipment; change in refrigerant classification for replacement in kind of refrigeration equipment.
 - Electrical – alteration or relocation of any 3-phase circuits, single phase 208- or 240-volt circuits, or single phase 277-volt circuits.
 - Plumbing – alteration or relocation of plumbing fixtures, water supply, water distribution, sanitary waste, special waste, or storm drainage
 - Gas Piping – alteration or relocation of fuel gas or fuel oil piping systems
 - Fire Sprinkler – alteration or relocation of water supply or equipment other than sprinkler heads; relocation of more than 10 percent of sprinkler heads per story.
 - Fire Suppression – alteration or relocation of suppression agent or equipment.
 - Fire Alarm – alteration of system logic; alteration or relocation of equipment other than alarm devices; replacement of more than 10 percent of compatible and/or appliances per story.
 - Installation or alterations involving:
 - The removal or addition of any wall partition or portion thereof.
 - Any structural component
 - Repair or replacement of any component of a fire or smoke rated assembly.
 - Any required means of egress system

- Any equipment regulated by the USBC
 - Installation of temporary structures such as stages, platforms, and bleachers.
 - Movement of a lot line that increases the hazard to or decreases the level of safety of an existing building or structure in comparison to the building code under which such building or structure was constructed.
 - Utility structures
 - Roof replacement projects where the work is the replacement of more than 100 square feet of an existing roof covering.
 - Adding/removing/altering parking lots and roads
 - Fences and guardrails required for pedestrian safety, accessibility, safeguards during construction or protection of paths of egress.
 - Application for a permit may be required by the building official for the installation of replacement siding, roofing, and windows in buildings within a historic district.
 - Any other work as required by the USBC.
2. Project review is required for:
- Removal or disturbing any lead paint or asbestos containing material.
 - Installation of wiring and equipment that operates at less than 50 volts. However, a construction permit is required where any such installations are in a plenum, penetrate fire rated or smoke protected construction or a component of any of the following:
 - Fire alarm system
 - Fire detection system
 - Fire suppression system
 - Smoke control system
 - Fire protection supervisory system
 - Elevator fire safety control system
 - Access or egress control system or delayed egress locking or latching system
 - Fire damper
 - Door control system
 - Flagpoles 30 feet or less in height
 - One story detached structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses or similar uses, provided the building area does not exceed 256 square feet and the structures are not classified as a Group F-1 or H occupancy.
 - Concrete or masonry walls, provided such walls do not exceed six feet in height above the finished grade.
 - Fences of any height for which a building permit is not required.
 - Ordinary repairs as defined in Section 108.2 Item 14 or deemed by the building official to be minor which does not adversely affect public health or safety.

3. No permits are required for:
 - Work not regulated by the USBC
 - Repair/replacement in kind or with similar materials or equipment unless such existing materials or equipment have since been deemed to be a safety hazard or utilize gas as a fuel source.
 - Painting
 - Landscaping/grounds maintenance
 - Building services
 - Recycling
 - Installation or replacement of floor finishes
 - Keys and locks not involving access controls or delayed egress
 - Portable fire extinguishers
 - Brick, stone, or timber walls used for minor decorative landscaping that are not used as retaining walls.
 - Site improvements not regulated by the USBC
 - Repair of sidewalks that are not part of an accessible route or exterior path of egress.
 - Maintenance

RESPONSIBILITIES:

A. General

The University Building Official shall be responsible for managing the building permit program to ensure the University's compliance with the USBC.

B. Permit Closeout

Project managers or others receiving permits shall coordinate with the Office of the University Building Official to complete the building permit closeout application. Project managers or others shall provide the completion documents and ensure that building permits are filed with certificates of use and occupancy with Facilities Archives. The Office of the University Building Official shall forward a copy of each building permit closeout to the Regional Fire Marshal if applicable.