

EL LAGO BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMIT ISSUANCE PROCEDURES

As of March 18, 2020

PERMIT AUTHORIZATION

El Lago ordinances require the issuance of building permits as a method of enforcing code minimums, ensuring residents and the general public's safety and upholding standards for all applicable construction and remodeling within the city. In advance of a building permit application, technical advice from the Building Official is always available for those citizens in the planning stage of construction.

Contractor Registration:

All contractors must register annually and be accepted before starting any work.

BENEFITS FROM THE ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS

Several direct and indirect benefits to the community are realized by the issuance and enforcement of building codes and standards.

The most obvious direct benefit to the community is maintaining an acceptable standard of health and safety for the citizenry. An example of maintaining a health standard as it relates to construction would be for a builder or remodeler to use the proper type of solder for copper piping, not the previously approved lead-based type. An example of maintaining a safety standard is to use the proper type of natural gas piping, which is not a galvanized steel water pipe.

A significant indirect benefit of enforcing building codes is that property values are more apt to be maintained. Another indirect benefit is the elimination of unscrupulous or marginally competent contractors who will be required by the City to be code compliant

Technical advice from the Building Official is always available for those citizens in the planning stage of construction for the designated On-Site Consultation fee.

WHEN PERMITS ARE REQUIRED

Generally, building permits are required for all new construction or additions, repairs made to recover from a disaster, remodeling, electrical rewiring, natural gas replacement, or any other modifications that change structure, form or integrity of the structure or its system, or may prove hazardous to the occupants and/ or the general public.

A General contractor's permit is required for ALL work (cosmetic included) being performed, with or without subcontractors, with a total retail value of \$20,000 or more. Unless the project exceeds \$20,000, no permits are required for replacement of non-structural components, such as exterior trim boards, or the replacement of existing fences using the exact location and materials, or cosmetic changes such as painting, flooring or siding. Construction projects that are typically below \$20,000 are noted below as "generally" not requiring a permit.

It is the responsibility of the party performing the work to obtain all required permits. Non permitted construction within El Lago will be halted and the offending party will pay a fine of double the permit fee; no work will be allowed to proceed until a permit has been obtained.

GENERAL NOTES

Each contractor or citizen who is performing their own work will be required to conform to all applicable codes and city ordinances that apply to each type of construction detailed below, including easement restrictions. For all new construction, full replacement major repairs and structural changes two drawings are required. Please consult with the Building Official for drawing specifics. Also, the inspector should be contacted for a determination of how many, and what kind of inspections will be required. A 24-hours' notice of an inspection must be provided to the inspector by the person or representative of the company that was issued the building permit.

CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS

The following is an alphabetical listing of construction items that are typically questioned. Also included are general statements about the construction.

1. ADDITIONS

- GARAGE (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. New garages are required to be at least 5' – 0 (including overhang) from the side lot line. Recreation rooms built above garages are permitted but garage must be at least 5' – 0 (including overhang) from the side lot line. Garage apartments for rent or lease are not permitted.
- HOUSE (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. Post tensioned slabs are required to be wet stamped by a Professional Engineer. New homes are required to be at least 5' – 0 (including overhang) from the side lot line. Single story homes are required to be off the rear easement and at least 10' – 0 from the rear lot line. The finished floor elevation is a minimum of 15.7 feet. The builder is to provide the Building Official a Certificate of Elevation from a licensed surveyor prior to the pouring of the slab and foundation.

2. AIR CONDITIONING REPAIR OR EXACT REPLACEMENT (Also see HVAC Repair / Replacement) permits are required for replacement or repair of main HVAC components which include, but not limited to the air handler, compressor, furnace, A/C coils and plenum. Permits are generally not required for duct repair, replacement, cleaning or system grill repair or replacement or like kind repairs.

3. BASKETBALL GOALS (permit required) – All permanently mounted basketball goals must conform to code requirements that state that all structures are to be behind the building setback line, which is usually 25'0" on the front and 20'0" on the side of corner lots. Basketball goals that are not permanently mounted are not required to be permitted, but must be removed from within the building setback line while not in use.

4. BOAT DOCK REPAIR / REPLACEMENT (See Dock Repair / Replacement)

5. BOAT HOUSES (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The Corps of Engineers authorization stating that the boat house is permitted must accompany the plans. All wood used in the construction is required to be a minimum of 2" thick (nominally) and of a pressure treated nature to withstand the effects of a high moisture environment.

6. BOAT PIER REPAIR / REPLACEMENT (See Dock Repair / Replacement) – Permit required for repairs or replacement except when minor repairs are required, but all materials must be the exact size, shape, material, and location, etcetera.

7. BRICK MASONRY

- NEW INSTALLATION – (permit required) For new or full replacement of existing masonry structures, also see New Construction. All new brick masonry installation requires a permit.

- REPAIR – (generally no permit required)
8. BULKHEAD REPAIR / REPLACEMENT (permit required) - Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. Accompanying the plans will be authorization from the Corps of Engineers stating that the bulkhead is permitted. All wood used in the construction is required to be a minimum of 2” thick (nominally) and of a pressure treated nature to withstand the effects of a high moisture environment.
 9. CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY (Commercial only) (permit required) – A Certificate of Occupancy is required when a commercial establishment is opening a business within the El Lago city limits. Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. During construction, periodic inspections are required. The Certificate of Occupancy is issued at the end of construction. The business will not be permitted to open until a Certificate of Occupancy is issued.
10. DECKS
- Decks other than Minor Repair (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The new deck must not be placed on any easement. Extreme caution must be exercised when digging the postholes to prevent damage to utility lines, especially power lines, which can cause death. A permit must be issued and an on-site inspection is required before any postholes are dug.
 - Minor Repair (permit generally not required) – Permit generally not required for minor repairs (i.e. replacement of planking), but all materials must be of like kind and in same location, etc.
11. DOCK REPAIR / REPLACEMENT (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. Accompanying the plans will be authorization from the Corps of Engineers stating that the dock is permitted. All wood used in the construction is required to be a minimum of 2” thick (nominally) and of a pressure treated nature to withstand the effects of a high moisture environment. A permit is generally not required for minor repairs (i.e. replacement of planking) but all materials must be the exact size, and in the same location, etcetera.
 12. DOORS (includes sidelights)– same size and location (no permit generally required), a permit is required for any structural changes (See Structural Repairs).
 13. DRAINS (French or regular) (permit generally not required) Street curbs and sidewalks may not be broken for individual residence drains; pop up drains placed in the yard adjacent to the curb must be used. All drains hooked directly to the storm sewers must be permitted by WCID #50.
 14. DRIVEWAY REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT (permit required)
All repairs, improvements and replacement require permits. Minor repairs of less than 100 square feet generally do not require a permit unless adjacent to public right of way (streets and sidewalks).
 15. ELEVATORS AND MEDICAL LIFTS REPAIRS AND INSTALLATION– (permit required), copy of state inspection also required when applicable.
 16. ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION AND REPAIRS (permit required) – A building permit is required for all electrical repairs and replacement excluding like kind fixture replacement (i.e. switches, receptacles, breakers, replacement of non GFCI with GFCI plugs). A licensed master electrician is required to apply for the building permit. Coordinating the service panel change-out with Centerpoint Energy and the electrician is recommended prior to the work being started.
17. FENCES
- Exact Replacement (permit generally not required) – Exact replacement means replacement of the exact size, height, like kind materials, exact post position, fence location, et cetera.

- New or different (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The new fence must not be placed within the building setback line. Issuance of the permit and an on-site inspection are required before any postholes are dug.
18. FIRE PLACE new, or replacement (permit required) – A permit is required for all new or replacement of fireplaces. No permit generally required for repairs.
 19. FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM INSTALLATION AND REPAIRS – (permit required) Engineered drawings are required on all new or replaced systems.
 20. FOUNDATION REPAIRS – See Slab New or Foundation Repairs
 21. GARAGE - for ADDITIONS See Additions – Garage, for same size door replacement, no permit generally required.
 22. GAS APPLIANCES (permit may be required) A building permit is generally not required to install or replace a natural gas appliance such as a heater, stove,, et cetera, (not including water heaters, see Water Heaters) as long as there is an existing gas connection for the appliance and the gas appliance is of same capacity, size, type, et cetera. However, a building permit is required if the meter has been removed, or the location, size, type of appliance, has been changed or altered, et cetera. The Building Official will inspect for the proper materials, proper installation, proper venting and witness the pressure test of the entire system. A licensed master plumber is required to apply for the building permit. The homeowner should be advised that CenterPoint Energy will not usually re-install the gas meter during the weekend. Thursdays are usually the last day of the week to call CenterPoint Energy for a meter replacement, which would be re-installed on Friday.
 23. GAS LINE INSTALLATION AND REPAIRS (permit required) – A building permit is required to replace the underground natural gas line. The Building Official will inspect for the proper materials, proper depth, and to witness the pressure test of the entire system. A licensed master plumber is required to apply for the building permit. The homeowner should be advised that CenterPoint Energy will not usually re-install the gas meter during the weekend. Thursdays are usually the last day of the week to call CenterPoint Energy for a meter replacement, which would be re-installed on Friday.
 24. GENERATOR – (permit required) All permanently installed generators require a permit.
 25. GREENHOUSES (See Storage Buildings) (permit required)
 26. GUTTERS (generally no permit required)
 27. HEATING SYSTEM REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT (See HVAC Repair / Replacement) (permit may be required)–A permit is required for replacement or repair of main HVAC components which include, but not limited to air handler, compressor, furnace, A/C coils and plenum. Permit are generally not required for duct repair, replacement or cleaning; or system grill repair or replacement)
 28. HOT TUBS (See Spas) (permit required)
 29. HOUSE ADDITIONS (See Additions – House) (permit required)
 30. HVAC REPAIR OR EXACT REPLACEMENT-See Air Conditioning or Heating System Repair or Replacement.
 31. IRRIGATION SYSTEM (permit required) A permit from WCID #50 must also be acquired. Irrigation systems must use schedule 40 pipe throughout, minimum depth of 8” from top of pipe, pipe must be laid with letters facing up, backfill with 5 gallons of dirt every 10’ before inspection, leaving joints exposed.
 32. INSULATION (no permit generally required) installation or replacement
 33. NEW CONSTRUCTION (permit required) – All new construction requires a permit. Select the exact

type of construction from the items in this list. All permits which require construction plans must be accompanied by two (2) sets for review. One(1) set will be held at the city offices and the other returned with the Building Official's signature indicating approval.

34. OCCUPANCY PERMITS (See Certificates of Occupancy) (permit required for commercial property only)
35. ON-SITE CONSULTATION (permit required) – On-site consultations are included in building permits fees. When only an on-site consultation is desired for a project that does not require a permit, a minimum fee of \$20.00 per consultation will be charged, whether a citizen or contractor. No fees are required for a telephone consultation.
36. OUTDOOR LIGHTING – (permit may be required) for permanently wired in lighting, see electrical.
37. PALAPAS – (permit required) All palapas must be treated with an approved fire retardant.
38. PATIO
 - Repair (permit generally not required) – Minor repairs (including slab repairs of less than 100 sq. ft) not effecting structural or integral properties of the patio being repaired generally do not require a permit.
 - New, different, or replacement (permit required) – Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The new patio must not be placed on any easement. Issuance of the permit and an on-site inspection are required before any digging can begin.
39. PIERS, FOUNDATION – (See Slab / Foundation Repairs).
40. PLUMBING – (permit required) Like kind fixture replacement permit is generally not required. Like kind replacement means replacement of the same size, shape, capacity, location, type of materials, etcetera.
41. PONDS/WATER FEATURES – (permit may be required) ponds and/or water features may require a permit depending on electrical, plumbing and structural design at the Building Officials discretion.
42. POOL HOUSE STRUCTURE (permit required)
43. REINSPECTION FEE (permit required) – One on-site re-inspection is included in all the permit fees stated in this listing. A \$40.00 re-inspection fee will be required for subsequent re-inspections. The re-inspection fee will be collected by the City Secretary before the re-inspection is performed. A minimum of a 24-hour notice is required to schedule an inspection. Charge for subsequent re-inspection will be at the discretion of the City Building Official.
44. REMODELING – Structural, electrical, plumbing, or HVAC changes (permit required) – A building permit is required for all new construction and additions, remodeling, electrical rewiring, structural change, egress change, natural gas replacement, and all other modifications or improvements that could be performed in an unsafe or unsanitary manner. For example, replacing kitchen countertops Generally does not require a permit, but taking out a wall or modifying the electrical system would require a permit.
45. ROOFING
 - MINOR REPAIR (permit generally not required) – Roofing Repair is considered minor if the area to be repaired is either less than 64 square feet (e.g. shingle/deck leaks) or 32 linear feet (e.g. chimney flashing or ridge repair). A resident may purchase an On-site Consultation permit for \$20.00. Cedar shake roofing is not allowed by Zoning Ordinance, Code 5.02 (5/23/96).
 - ROOFING REPLACEMENT OR MAJOR REPAIR. (permit required) New, replacement, re-decking, and roofing redesign, must comply with building code (IRC 2006). For sky lights, see

Sky Lights.

46. SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM – All repairs outside the slab must be permitted through WCID #50
47. SECURITY SYSTEM (see electrical for wired in systems)
48. SIDEWALK/PATHWAYS NEW, REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT (permit required) – All new, repair or replacement of sidewalks requires a permit if the sidewalk is adjacent to, or open to public rights of way. Minor repairs not adjacent to public rights of way and less than 30 square feet generally do not require a permit.
49. SIDING REPLACEMENT (permit generally not required) – Cedar shake siding is not allowed by Zoning Ordinance, Code 5.02 (5/23/96).
50. SIGNS
 - Commercial (permit required)
 - With Lighting – A building permit is required for the installation of any sign with lighting. The type and location of electrical conduit and circuitry, sign location, height, size, type of foundation, foundation reinforcement, et cetera, will be inspected for code compliance.
 - Without Lighting – A building permit is required for the installation of any sign without lighting. The sign location, height, size, type of foundation, foundation reinforcement, et cetera, will be inspected for code compliance.
 - Residential (permit not required) Signs in the residential zones are limited by City Code of Ordinance, Chapter 14.
 - For Sale / Political / Construction– (permit not required) Signs may be located only on the applicable property. Construction signs may only be present during the period of construction. The maximum size sign allowed is six square feet. All garage or yard sale signs are required to be located either on the property or in the designated sign boxes located at the entrances of the City.
51. SKYLIGHT – (permit required) Skylight repairs generally do not require a permit.
52. SLAB - New or Foundation Repairs (permit required) – Engineered drawings are required for new slabs and initial foundation repairs. An inspection of the work done prior to backfilling is required. Subsequent foundation warranty repairs (not to include additional piers) generally do not require a permit.
53. SPAS (permit required) Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The spa location, plumbing connections, gas line connections, electrical connections, et cetera, will be inspected per applicable codes and ordinances. A four foot fence is required to be installed around all spas that are at least 24” depth.
 - In-ground – All gates must be self-closing and self-latching.
 - Portable –
54. STAIRCASE – See Remodeling or Additions
55. STORAGE BUILDINGS (permit required) - Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The storage building or greenhouse must have a permanent foundation, such as concrete or a tied down loose framed floor. The storage building or greenhouse location, plumbing connections, gas line connections, electrical connections, et cetera, will be inspected per applicable codes and ordinances.
56. STRUCTURAL REPAIRS (permit required) - Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for a permit. The structural repairs must be identified on the drawings and an on-site inspection must be performed prior to any work being started. The structural repairs will be inspected

per applicable codes and ordinances.

57. SWIMMING POOLS (permit required) Two sets of construction plans are required when applying for permit. The pool location, equipment location, plumbing connections, gas line connections, electrical connections, et cetera, will be inspected per applicable codes and ordinances. A four foot fence is required to be installed around all pools with at least 24” depth. All gates must be self-closing and self-latching.

58. WATER HEATER – (permit required) A permit is required when water heaters are installed, initial or replacement.

59. WINDOWS

- REPLACEMENT (permit generally not required) – Generally not required for replacement of same window size footprint
- NEW (permit required) Windows to be added where none previously existed are considered a structural repair. See Structural Repair above.