



SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Owner Builder guidelines

Restrictions

“Owner/builder” means a natural person and members of that person’s immediate family working to build a residence for occupancy by the owner/builder, but shall not include corporations and their agents, partnerships and their agents, nonprofit corporations and their agents, and all persons who intend to construct a private residence for sale, lease, or rental to other persons.

No owner/builder shall have work performed on any owner-built structure or accessory structure for compensation by any contractors, their agents, employees or other tradespeople; nor shall any person, firm, corporation acting as contractor, or any agent or employee, or any other tradesperson perform work on an owner-built structure or accessory structure for compensation, except as provided by this article, and as exempted by RCW [18.27.090](#) which allow compensation for any work or operation on one undertaking for which the aggregate price for labor and materials does not exceed \$500.00.

Nothing shall be construed to disallow persons working without compensation to perform work on any residence, appurtenant or accessory structure.

An owner/builder may, however, employ licensed electrical contractors, licensed plumbing contractors, or septic tank and drain field installers to work on a structure built under the owner/builder permit, which work shall comply with and be conducted in accordance with the State Electrical Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, and other statutes, regulations and ordinances pertaining to septic tanks and drain fields. Wiring and other electrical work may be performed only by the permit holder or a licensed electrical contractor pursuant to RCW [19.28.120](#) and [19.28.610](#). (Ord. 80-1992)

Checklist

Before applying for an owner builder project, prepare the following at a minimum:

- ✓ [Owner builder agreement](#), signed and notarized;
- ✓ Any necessary [sewage/septic](#) and [water availability](#) documentation;
- ✓ Project description including total surface area of ground disturbance, existing and proposed, and estimated valuation
- ✓ Site plan including:
 - parcel number and (if already assigned) street address;
 - name of owner;
 - driveway location (proposed or current);
 - existing and proposed structures and elements with dimensions and distances from each other and property boundaries
- ✓ Profile plan or section drawing showing:

- topography of property;
 - profile, heights and use of all existing and proposed structures
- ✓ Construction drawings with enough detail to show conformance to current building codes including:
 - mechanical and plumbing plans;
 - floor plan;
 - roofing;
 - LPG tanks and piping
 - insulation;
 - documentation of WSEC compliance
- ✓ Stormwater documentation:
 - [Impervious surfaces worksheet](#);
 - [Stormwater Certificate of Compliance](#), signed;
 - Stormwater plan for projects involving more than 2,000 square feet of impervious surfaces

Inspections

The following inspections are conducted for owner builder projects:

- Setbacks and stormwater BMPs (erosion control)
- Plumbing/Mechanical
- Electrical approval (from Labor & Industries verification)
- Insulation
- Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) compliance
- Final/life safety

Renewals and revocation

Permits issued for construction of structures shall be for a period of one year, renewable for four additional years. Construction, including all required life safety inspections under new permits, shall be completed within 5 years from the date of issuance. If construction is not completed within 5 years the owner / builder shall be required to obtain a new permit and also pay full permit fees. Read more about owner builder permit provisions per San Juan County Code [here](#).

Recording

Once final approval and a certificate of occupancy have been granted, Building Department staff will submit the owner builder agreement, permit and certificate of occupancy for recording by the San Juan County Auditor.