

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BUILDING PERMITS

Everything you need to know to get your residential building permit in Montgomery County



Ben Norkin  
Maryland Licensed Architect

# WELCOME

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You're almost there!

You have a great design, you just need a building permit so you can break ground.

I know it can be difficult navigating the various permits and drawing requirements you may need to get your project approved by the Department of Permitting Services. Reading the Zoning ordinance usually isn't enough. Unfortunately there are some things you just have to learn from experience.

The good news is Montgomery County really isn't that bad. The better news is that I'm here to help!

I've taken all my experience in getting dozens of residential building permits over the last decade and distilled it in this book. Following the guidance here will help you be more prepared for your permit application and will help you get your permit more quickly and with fewer comments from the County.



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# REQUIRED DRAWINGS

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The drawings and documentation you need to produce to receive a building permit are significantly less comprehensive than what is actually required to fully document an addition or new construction home of average quality.

The following pages list all the published (and unpublished!) submittal requirements you'll need to provide to the Department of Permitting Services. This includes architectural, structural, zoning and mechanical.

## **IN THIS CHAPTER:**

Detailed requirements for all the drawings you are required to submit. This includes Zoning, Architecture, Structure and Mechanical

# COVER SHEET

## REQUIRED INFORMATION

Even with plans being submitted online as individual sheets (not one combined PDF), you still need a Cover Sheet. The following list is the minimum required on your Cover Sheet.

- Drawing Index / List of Drawings being submitted
- Contact Info for Owner or Builder...whomever is submitting the permits
- List of Applicable Codes (see below)
- Scope of Work statement (explain what you're proposing)

## LIST OF APPLICABLE CODES

You can find the full list of applicable codes right here:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/Codes/residential-const-codes.html>

The ones I typically reference for Detached Single Family Residential projects are:

- 2021 International Residential Code
- 2021 International Mechanical Code
- 2021 International Plumbing Code
- 2021 International Energy Conservation Code
- Montgomery County Code Chapter 17 - Electricity
- Maryland Building Performance Standards Regulations COMAR 09.12.51

## OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

None of this is required, but may be helpful for the Permit Techs doing your pre-screening

### ZONING INFORMATION

Some Architects put their entire zoning analysis on the Cover Sheet. I don't, but I do include a preview, which includes the address, subdivision, block, lot and zone and a small map of the area. Then I have a note for the plan reviewers to see my Zoning sheet for all the required info.

### ABBREVIATIONS

A list of abbreviations you use in your drawings.

### CODE ANALYSIS

I list the type of construction, usually 5B and whether or not the project has, or is required to add, sprinklers.

### SYMBOLS LEGEND

Drawings/details of various symbols you might have in your drawings, showing things like what your section markers look like...

### SECONDARY PERMIT STATEMENT

Include a statement as to whether or not the project will require a Drainage Plan, Sediment Control, Demo or Right-of-Way Restoration permit. I put this on my Cover Sheet and Zoning drawings. If so, include the relevant permit number. See the Sediment Control section of this book.

### LOCATION MAP

A map showing the general location of the project. I use a Google Maps screenshot.

# ZONING SHEET

After pre-screening, Zoning is the first review you have to go through. There are a few different reviewers, each of whom may ask for slightly different information. I have ALSO seen that homeowners or engineers who have submitted permit sets seem to be held to a lower standard than Architects, so it is possible you could get approved with less than what I typically show.

## ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN

- site plan should be at an appropriate scale
- site plan must be done by a licensed Architect, Surveyor\* or Professional Engineer
- property boundaries shown and identified (length and bearing)
- North Arrow
- draw required setbacks and dimension from property lines
- location of existing house, with length of each exterior wall
- location of addition with length of each exterior wall and dimension to nearest property line
- spot elevations at each corner or portion of the front of the house, to be used for average grade calculations
- other improvements, like driveways, porches, etc.
- show roof overhang with dimension from house. Note encroachment beyond any setback if applicable (an eave can typically encroach 30" into a setback)
- actual setbacks (dimension from each property line to the nearest point of the house)
- street names

\* You may be able to sketch on a survey provided by a licensed surveyor. The survey must be current and accurate. It likely will not be accepted with a statement that accuracy is +/- 1ft or more

## ZONING ELEVATION

I provide a separate front elevation on my Zoning sheet to show my project complies with height limits.

Some architects put the following information on their architectural front elevation. I have also seen it done in a schematic section and also a table, just numbers with no drawings.

- Average grade at front of house, above Sea Level (see Useful Resources below)
- Height to midpoint or peak of roof
- Height of first floor above average grade, in Sea Level

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### COUNTY ZONING MAP

<https://mcatlas.org/zoning/>

Use this to find your Zone and other important property information. Click the ACCT # to view Maryland Property Records information. Note the WSSC Grid...

### COUNTYWIDE TOPO FILES

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/tools/gis-and-mapping/data-downloads/>

Click <dir> 01\_CAD\_PlanTopoTiles then the <dir> link to your WSSC Grid you found on the zoning map. Download the planimetric.dwg and the property.dwg and insert one into the other. This will give you the contours on your site. It's not perfect, but it's usually good enough.

# OTHER STUFF

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This chapter will cover the basics of Accessory Structures, Accessory Dwelling Units, Deck permits and Variances.



# DECK PERMIT

Montgomery County has made it fairly easy to receive a building permit if the only thing you want to build is a deck. A homeowner can apply for this without an architect or engineer.

## SITE PLAN

Provide a site plan with the following. You can generally use a survey and draw over it.

- Existing house location
- Property setbacks
- Deck location with length and width noted
  - Note any encroachments into a setback.
  - A deck can usually encroach into setbacks as follows: 3 feet side, 9 feet front and rear.
- Note on the drawing that the deck will be construction according to the Montgomery County Residential Typical Deck Details.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESIDENTIAL TYPICAL DECK DETAILS

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DPS/Resources/Files/RCI/MCResidentialDeckDetails.pdf>

Here's the catch...to benefit from this easy permit application, the deck must be built in accordance with the Montgomery County Residential Typical Deck Details.

That's not a bad thing, and by this point most quality framers should be familiar with it. It's just not super customized. If you want something special it will have to be designed by an architect or engineer.

## IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT DECK CONSTRUCTION

- 1) Montgomery County requires all deck ledgers to be through-bolted into the house. No lag bolts or epoxy. Details for this connection are included in the typical residential deck details linked above.
- 2) All new foundations within 60" of the existing house must be placed at the same depth as the existing house. This includes deck piers and footings.

