WHEN IS A BUILDING PERMIT NECESSARY?

As a homeowner or contractor, there may be times when you are uncertain whether it is necessary to secure a building permit. The following guidelines should be used:

Work Requiring a Permit: (The following list is not meant to be exclusive, if you are in doubt as to whether the work you are considering needs a permit, please call the Building Inspector.)

- New homes, additions, garages, or storage sheds.
- Interior renovations, involving the cutting away of any wall or structural member.
- Decks and ramps.
- Roofing (when re-roofing more than 25% of existing roof).
- Siding (when re-siding more than 25% of existing house).
- Window or exterior door replacement.
- The installation of swimming pools, hot tubs, or spas.
- Fences over 6ft high.
- Retaining walls over 4ft high.
- Wood stoves, fireplace inserts, fireplaces, or chimneys, outdoor wood furnaces.
- Demolition of any existing structure.
- Signs-new or alteration of existing signs.
- Change of use (e.g., from storage to living space.)

A Permit Is Not Necessary For Ordinary Repairs: "Any maintenance which does not affect the structure, egress, fire protection systems, fire ratings, energy conservation provisions, plumbing, sanitary, gas, electrical or other utilities."

Why Should I get a permit? Because it is the law. Massachusetts Building Code(780CMR 5110.1.0) states: "It shall be unlawful to construct, reconstruct, alter, repair, remove or demolish a building or structure...without first filing a written application with the building official and obtaining the required permit therefor."

In addition, a building permit is for your own protection. The building inspector will require the work performed to meet the standards of the Mass Building Code, which translates into your security. Insurance companies may require a Certificate of Occupancy or approval of the building official for certain work. If you are a licensed contractor, failure to secure a building permit could result in the loss of your license.

How To Obtain a Permit: Fill out an application on-line.