



**CITY OF PORTLAND OREGON  
BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**



# Get Legal Program

The Bureau of Development Services' goal is to ensure that construction is completed under permit and meets the adopted building and zoning codes for the protection of Portland's citizens.

The bureau is committed to working with customers who need to legalize work done in the past without the required building permits.

Perhaps work was done by a previous owner, or maybe you just didn't know you needed a permit for a particular type of work. Whatever your situation may be, the bureau's new Get Legal Program may be right for you.

The Get Legal Team assists customers to ensure they receive the assistance needed to realize the goal of legalizing their property. The program brings bureau specialists together to assess work done without a permit and provide assistance through a tailored work plan and one-on-one assistance.

The program is available to both residential and commercial property owners. Upon acceptance into the program, specialists within BDS will assess your situation, develop a tailored work plan for legalizing the property, and assist you with applying for permits and appeals.

After permits are issued to legalize work at your property, you will have up to a year to complete any required work and have it inspected and approved.

The Get Legal Program is not intended to replace the bureau's existing process for permitting and legalizing work. However, it does provide an avenue for customers who have a complex situation and need specialized assistance with legalizing their property.



## *Program Information*

### *Program cost*

The application fee for this program is \$350. However, if you don't need to submit an appeal, \$100 of the application fee will be refunded to you. Low-income property owners may qualify for an application fee waiver.

The program application fee does not include the cost of the permits or other development-related costs. Permits must be purchased separately.

### *Services covered*

- A consultation inspection performed at your property.
- An in-person meeting with the Get Legal Team to discuss plans and options for legalizing the work done at the property.
- A customized work plan developed and mailed to the applicant after the team meeting.
- A team specialist to assist the applicant to prepare and submit an appeal application. If an appeal is not necessary, \$100 of the initial application fee will be refunded.
- A team specialist to assist the applicant in the Development Services Center with obtaining all necessary permits needed to legalize the work.

### *Application fee waiver*

Application fee waivers are available to low-income property owners. Contact 503-823-7281 to determine eligibility for the waiver.

### *Timeline*

The amount of time it takes from the time you apply to the Get Legal Program until permits are issued depends on the scope of the work to be legalized. By applying to the program, the applicant agrees to complete work and have it approved within one year from the time permits are issued.

## Application

To apply for the program, you should contact 503-823-7281 to request application materials or visit our website at [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us) to download an application form.

## Work that cannot be legalized in the program

There may be instances where the program cannot legalize work in its current state. For example, a triplex that was created without permits in a zone that only allows a duplex. In this case, the property cannot be legalized as a triplex and must be converted to a duplex or single-family home to become legal.

## Questions

If you have questions, need an application form, or want information about a fee waiver, please call 503-823-7281. You may also visit our website at [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us)

## Helpful Information

City of Portland, Oregon - Bureau of Development Services  
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Portland, OR 97201

### Permits are issued at the following location:

Development Services Center (DSC), First Floor, Suite 1500  
Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 3:00 pm  
Thursday Evenings, 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Permit applications are available on our website.

**Visit our website [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us)**

## Important Telephone Numbers

Get Legal .....	503-823-7281
Building Code Information .....	503-823-7310
Zoning Information .....	503-823-7526
Permit Information .....	503-823-7363
Trade Permits by FAX .....	503-823-3018
<b>Document Services</b> .....	503-823-7357
Permit Status .....	503-823-7000
<b>Resource and Records</b> .....	503-823-7660
FAX Requests for Records .....	503-823-7765
<b>Inspections</b>	
Inspection Request Line .....	503-823-7000
TTY .....	503-823-6868

## Reasons to get a permit

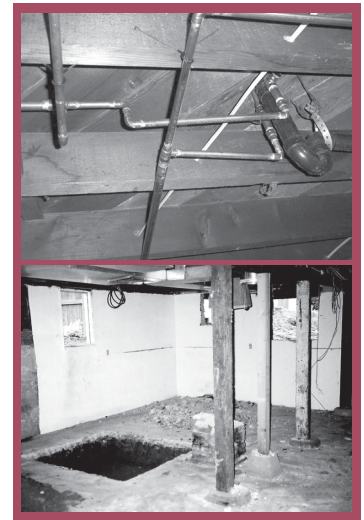
1. **It's the law.** State Building Code requires that permits be obtained for certain types of work.
2. **Permits protect you,** your family, home, business, and your financial investment.
3. **Permits are designed to help ensure** that licensed contractors do the work if required.
4. **Permitted work requires inspection** approval from a certified BDS inspector.
5. **Inspections ensure that work is done safely** and meets the minimum code requirements. Incorrect installations can result in house fires, flood damage and/or structural problems.
6. **Minor problems that could lead to costly repairs,** liability and life/safety issues can also be detected during permit inspections and brought to your attention before the situation worsens.
7. **When selling a property or home,** the buyer, realtor and lender may require that unpermitted work be corrected, properly permitted and inspected before closing. This leaves you in the position of scrambling to "get legal".

## How to research permits

- Visit [www.bds.ci.portland.or.us](http://www.bds.ci.portland.or.us)
  - Go to Permit/Case Info
  - Select the Permit/Case Search button
  - When the search page opens, enter the address of the property you are researching.

This is a new informational service, so it will reflect only recent permit activity.

- Contact BDS Resources and Records by calling 503-823-7660 or visit the DSC.



All information in this publication is subject to change.