

Section One

General Information

Scope

This section is a brief overview of the operation of Knox County Code Administration and related departments. Information that is more detailed is included in sections two and three of this manual as well as in the appendices.

Organizational context

Knox County Code Administration and Inspection is comprised of the Code Enforcement Department, the Building Inspection Department and the Fire Prevention Bureau and works in conjunction with and under the supervision of the Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works as well as in conjunction with other local, state, and federal departments and agencies as necessary.

Scope of Regulatory Authority

Engineering

The hydrologists, subdivision inspectors and other staff from the Department of Engineering and Public Works enforce regulations regarding grading and restoration of land, control of erosion and runoff, and other drainage features or systems as well as the design and installation of storm sewers, paving and other site improvements. This department also regulates any work located in the flood zone or flood fringe.

Codes Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Department enforces regulations contained in ordinances adopted by Knox County Government that regulates Zoning, Blighted Properties, and Dirty Lots. These ordinances are enforced through the plans review process, inspections and issuing of citations. This department regulates the use of land, buildings and structures as well as setbacks, lot coverage, number and height of buildings, parking, signs, towers, home occupations, and other aspects of zoning.

Building Inspections

The Building Inspection Department enforces the regulations of the building, gas, mechanical, plumbing and accessibility codes through the plan review and inspection processes. This department accepts applications for permits and appeals, collects fees, issues permits, schedules inspections, keeps permit record files and issues occupancy certificates.

Fire Prevention Bureau

The Fire Prevention Bureau enforces the regulations of the Fire Codes including the Standard Fire Prevention Code and the Life Safety Code through the plan review and inspection processes. This department issue certificates of completion and performs inspections of existing buildings and fire detection and suppression systems on a regular basis.

Other Departments and Agencies

Other local, state, and federal departments and agencies administer many of the regulations related to building permits. For example, the Metropolitan Planning Commission implements the rezoning or subdivision of property, new address assignments and use-on-review processes, the State of Tennessee permits and inspects all electrical work in Knox County, the Knox County Health Department regulates septic systems, the Beer Board takes applications for beer licenses and the local utility district regulates sewer and water connections. To identify the governing authority for any other aspects of a project please contact Codes Administration.

Permit process

Planning ahead for your project is very important due to the various time frames required for different types of permits. The total time it takes to get a permit can be as little as a few days for simple projects or as much as a few months or more for complex projects or when special reviews or variances are required.

Application

Applications for permits and variances must be made in person between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday in the Knox County Codes Administration and Inspection office located in suite 547 of the City-County building at 400 Main Avenue.

Plan review

Prior to the issuance of a permit, plans are reviewed for compliance with regulations. The plan review process may range from a simple setback check by the office staff for a residential pool to a thorough examination of all documents pertaining to a new commercial building by engineering, code enforcement, and fire and building plan examiners. When the submitted plans are reviewed, there may be requests for additional information. Revisions are to be submitted for reviews the same as for a new application. After all plan reviews are complete and all required information is received, the applicant will be notified and the permit can be issued. Any field change orders made during construction must have plans submitted for review before a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued. Refer to Appendix E for submittal requirements.

Fees

Permit and plan review fees are based on the value of the work to be performed or on the type of permit in some cases. For a complete listing of all fees, please refer to Appendix A. All fees shall be payable to Knox County Codes.

Conditions

Each permit covers all work on a project including plumbing, mechanical and gas but not the electrical which must be permitted through the State of Tennessee electrical inspector at the local utility company. Separate permits are required for kitchen hood systems, fuel tanks, sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems and storage of flammable and non-flammable gases.

A permit issued shall be construed to be a license to proceed with the work and not as authority to violate, cancel, alter, or set aside any of the provisions of the technical codes, nor shall issuance of a permit prevent the building official from thereafter requiring a correction of errors in plans, construction, or violations of the codes.

Time limit

With the exception of a few 30-day permits, a permit is valid for the entire duration of a project no matter how long it takes unless the work is not started within six months or if the work is stopped for six months in which case a new permit will be required.

Inspections

After a permit is issued it is the contractor or owner's responsibility to schedule all required inspections. A fee of \$30 will be charged to the contractor listed on the permit for each re-inspection of rejected items or for extra scheduled inspections. Electrical work in Knox County is required to be inspected by the state electrical inspector.

Certificates

A Certificate of Occupancy or a Certificate of Completion will be issued to the contractor listed on the permit after all inspections are complete and all fees are paid. Conditional or temporary certificates may be issued at the discretion of the Fire Marshal or Building Official.

Codes and Ordinances

The following is a list of currently adopted codes and ordinances as of July 20, 2007. Amendments and updated versions of the codes and ordinances may have been adopted since the publication of this manual. Please check with the code office to verify the current editions. Please refer to Appendix B for Knox County's adopted amendments to these codes. In the event that the provisions of these codes and ordinances conflict, the code officials shall enforce the more stringent of the conflicting provisions.

Codes

2006 International Building Code (IBC)
2006 International Fire Code (IFC)
2006 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code (LSC)
2006 International Mechanical Code (IMC)
2006 International Plumbing Code (IPC)

2006 International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC)
2006 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)
2006 International Existing Building Code (IEBC)
2006 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)
**2006 International Code Council Performance Code
For Buildings and Facilities (ICCPC)**
2006 International Residential Code (IRC)

Copies of these codes are available from the International Code Council. Phone 1-800-877-2224
And NFPA phone 1-800-344-3555.

Ordinances

Zoning Ordinance for Knox County, as amended through July 20, 2007
Minimum Subdivision Regulations for Knox County, as amended through July, 2007
Major Road Plan for Knox County
Knox County Mobile/Manufactured Home Parks Ordinance
Knox County Blighted Properties Ordinance
Knox County Dirty Lot Ordinance
Knox County Swimming Pool Ordinance
Historical Structure Records Ordinance

Copies of these ordinances can be obtained from the Knox County Commission Library, phone 865-215-2683, or from MPC, phone 865-215-2500. Other regulations are adopted by reference in these documents and will be enforced as applicable. State and Federal regulations are also enforced as applicable.

Variances

There are two appeals boards that meet once a month to consider variance requests. You may apply to the Board of Zoning Appeals for variances or clarification of the regulations in the Zoning Ordinance for Knox County. These may be appeals of administrative decisions, appeals for practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, appeals of use-on-review decisions or appeals of zoning map interpretations. This board meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 1:30 PM in the Main Assembly room of the City-County Building. The application fee is \$100.00. Call the Code Administration office for the application deadline.

The Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals may be applied to for variance or clarification of the regulations in the currently adopted building and fire codes. These may be appeals of administrative decisions or appeals for equivalent alternates. This board meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 3:00 PM in suite 549 of the City-County Building. The application fee is \$50.00. Call the Code Administration office for the application deadline.

Please refer to the Appendix E of this manual for the specific application requirements and meeting details for each board. For a complete description of the powers, duties and requirements of these boards refer to the Zoning Ordinance for Knox County and to the 2006 International Building Code.

Violations and Penalties

Violation of these codes and ordinances of Knox County is considered a class C misdemeanor and each day constitutes a separate violation. The maximum penalty is \$1000.00 per violation. If compliance is not obtained with reasonable efforts within a reasonable time period; violators may be issued a stop work order, violation notice, or a citation to appear in General Sessions Court. Violations of state and federal regulations are reported to the appropriate authorities.

Permits Required

The Zoning Ordinance for Knox County, Tennessee requires permits as follows.

6.10 Permits

6.10.01

Except as herein before provided, a written building permit shall be obtained from the Department of Code Administration and Inspections before starting or proceeding with the erection, structural alteration, or moving of any building or structure, or changing the use of any building or land, except that no permit shall be required for maintenance or installation of interior finishes in one or two family residences, agricultural uses and accessory farm buildings, or for home gardening or similar uses in any zone.

6.10.04

Whenever the use of a building or land is changed to a use of the same or more restricted classification a "Use and Occupancy" permit shall be obtained from the Department of Code Administration and Inspection.

6.11 Grading Permit

6.11.02

An application for a grading permit shall be submitted to the Supervisor of Knox County Codes Administration and Enforcement prior to the beginning of any grading, clearing, excavating, filling or other disturbance of natural terrain.

The 2006 International Building Code requires permits as follows.

105.1 Permits

105.1 Required. Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit.

Licensing Requirements

Knox County Codes Administration does not issue or require a local license for building, plumbing, gas or mechanical work. The only Knox County license required is a business license when required by the Knox County Clerk Business Tax Division. A State of Tennessee Building Contractor's license is required for any job, which exceeds \$25,000. The State of Tennessee Board of Licensing Contractors requires a Limited Liability Plumbers license for all plumbers performing projects of less than \$25000 unless exempt. The State of Tennessee Board for Licensing Contractors issues licenses in 9 major construction classifications each of which has specialty sub-classifications such as for fire detection systems. A State of Tennessee Home Improvement Contractors License is required for any residential construction in excess of \$3000 except when a property owner is building on their own property for their own use. For electrical licensing requirements contact the state electrical inspector at the local utility company.

