

## Obtaining a Building Permit for an Existing Structure

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When a property owner wants to change the use or occupancy of a structure originally built without a building permit or under the “Ag Exemption” provision of Garfield County’s Building Resolution, there are additional requirements that must be met before the Building Department will issue a building permit for the existing structure.

Because an existing building’s structural and architectural elements were not subject to inspection during original construction, the following items must be submitted to the Building Department:

1. Depending on the type and use of the building, a building permit packet (application form and checklist) must be completed. Building permit application packets are available online by visiting the following web-link:  
<https://www.garfield-county.com/community-development/building-permit-applications.aspx>
2. A Colorado licensed design professional (Architect or Engineer) must perform a site visit and inspection of the existing structure to verify that it complies with Garfield County’s currently adopted building codes. More specifically, the design professional must certify with a sealed letter that the existing structure complies with applicable key items as follows:
  - **Structural Provisions** – Verify minimum roof snow loads, frost depth and wind speed requirements comply with minimum requirements; review existing foundations and footings; wall, floor & roof framing members; lateral bracing (shear walls); etc.
  - **Non-Structural Provisions** – Occupancy/use classification(s); fire protection system requirements; fire separation requirements; means of egress requirements including stairs, landings & railings; smoke & carbon monoxide alarms; etc.

Building plans – drawn to scale and illustrating the existing structure – shall be submitted along with the application. In some cases where certain remedial measures must be taken in order to comply with current building code provisions, these modifications to the existing structure shall be drawn, detailed or otherwise specified by the design professional and included with the building permit application.

3. Upon approval of the application, a permit will be issued and the final permit fees will be collected. Typically there are one or two inspections performed by the county to finalize the process and issue a Certificate of Occupancy if applicable.
4. Additional permits for septic, electrical or driveways may be required and, if applicable, these must be submitted and finalized prior to issuance of a C.O. from the Building Department.

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*Please contact the Building Department with any questions.*

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