



### **Projects that require a building permit:**

Under the Ontario Building Code Act, a building permit is required to construct, demolish, renovate, alter, install or change the use of a building. The following is a list of typical projects or situations that require the issuance of a building permit prior to construction:

- New buildings or structures greater than 10 square metres (108 ft<sup>2</sup>) in area, measured by the outside dimensions. This includes sheds, sleeping cabins or other accessory buildings or structures, including sheds and shed packages purchased from a store.
- Additions to existing buildings or structures.
- Renovations that involve structural framing.
- Decks: new or replacement of an existing one.
- Wood burning appliances: new or replacement of existing components.
- Replacement of windows or doors if the rough opening size is enlarged
- Relocation or addition of plumbing fixtures.
- Replacement of water supply or drain pipes.
- Crib docks. If the crib area is 15 square metres (161 ft<sup>2</sup>) or more, approval is also required from the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- Wind turbines that generate more than 3 kW of electricity.
- Greenhouses, if it is to be a permanent structure.
- Quonset huts and pre-engineered metal buildings.
- Replacement of piers under buildings.

### **Projects that do not require a building permit:**

It is not necessary to obtain building permits to perform the following work. However, you must still comply with the requirements of the **Township of Algonquin Highlands Zoning By-law 03-22** and if applicable, the Ontario Building Code.

- Accessory buildings with a floor area of 10 square metres (108 ft<sup>2</sup>) or less. Note: Zoning By-law requirements must be followed.
- Fences.
- Swimming pools and hot tubs.
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures (toilet, sink, bathtub, shower, hot water tank) in their original location.
- Replacement of windows or doors provided the rough opening size does not change.
- Replacement of shingles or other roofing material. However, if you are replacing or adding new roof trusses or rafters, a building permit is required.
- Installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels. However an electrical permit may be required – check with an electrician or your local Hydro One office.
- Floating or pole docks.
- Wind turbines that generate 3 kW or less of electricity.
- Tarped vehicle or boat shelters.

If the above lists do not include specifics of your project or you are not sure if a permit will be required, please contact the Building Department at **705-489-2379**.



## Township of Algonquin Highlands

### Building & By-law Enforcement: Frequently Asked Questions

The following information is provided for convenience purposes only. Consult the [Township of Algonquin Highlands Zoning By-law 03-22](#) for verification and additional information.

#### ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

**Q: Where can I obtain a copy of the Ontario Building Code?**

A: Building code products can be purchased from ServiceOntario either online at <http://www.publications.serviceontario.ca>

or by phone:

(416) 326-5300

(416) 325-3408 TTY

1-800-668-9938 Toll-free within Canada

1-800-268-7095 TTY Toll-free within Ontario

#### BUILDING PERMIT PLANS

**Q: I would like to purchase a set of house plans that I saw in a magazine or on the internet. Would these be acceptable to submit with my building permit application?**

A: Under the new Ontario Building Code requirements, all plans, drawings and specifications submitted for building permit approval must be prepared by a certified designer registered with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. A certified designer will have a Building Code Identification Number (BCIN).

**Q: How can I check if my designer has a BCIN or is qualified under the Building Code?**

A: The qualification and registration status of a designer may be verified through the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's public registry, accessible online through their Qualification and Registration Tracking System (QuARTS). To search the Public Register, visit <https://csonramp.mah.gov.on.ca/onmah/preLogin.do>, click on Search Public Register, and enter the designer's surname or business name.

**Q: Can I do the drawings for my own house or addition?**

A: The Ontario Building Code allows a property-owner to prepare and submit their own building plans provided that the plans are legible, drawn at an appropriate scale, and contain all the required information (see *Information to accompany a building permit application form*).

**Q: My brother-in-law knows AutoCAD and has offered to do my house plans for me. Is this okay?**

A: If your brother-in-law is a certified designer and has a registered BCIN number with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, his drawings would be acceptable for submission with your building permit application. He would need to fill out and sign the Schedule 1: Designer Information sheet, included with your building permit application form.

#### GARAGES, SHEDS, SLEEPING CABINS & OTHER ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

**Q: Am I allowed to build a sleeping cabin on my property?**

A: If there is an existing home or cottage on your property, you may also be able to erect a sleeping cabin, depending on the zoning. **\*Please Note: Not all zones permit sleeping cabins, so be sure to check the Zoning By-law.**

**Q: If permitted in my zone, what is the maximum size sleeping cabin that I can build?**

A: The maximum allowed floor area of a sleeping cabin is 45 square metres (485 ft<sup>2</sup>). This includes covered decks and verandas. The maximum permitted height is 5 metres (16 ft).

**Q: Can I put a bathroom in my sleeping cabin?**

A: A bathroom is permitted in a sleeping cabin, conditional upon approval for a septic system.

**Q: Can I put a kitchen in my sleeping cabin?**

A: No, a kitchen is not permitted in a sleeping cabin.

**Q: Can I erect a utility or storage shed on my vacant property?**

A: No. These types of structures are considered “accessory” to the principal building, such as your home or cottage. They are not permitted as the principal building.

**Q: Are there restrictions as to where I can put a shed, sleeping cabin or other accessory building on my property?**

A: Yes. The Zoning By-law has a number of regulations concerning accessory buildings, including setbacks from property lines, the high water mark, and your home or cottage. This includes small buildings 9 square metres (108 ft<sup>2</sup>) or less, even if a building permit is not required.

## **REQUIRED SETBACKS**

**Q: Can I tear down my existing house or cottage and rebuild a new one, or build an addition onto my house or cottage if it doesn't meet the current setback requirements?**

A: Maybe. A building or structure that does not meet current requirements is considered “non-conforming”. There are many variables that determine whether you can re-build or build an addition onto a non-conforming structure. For more information refer to section 4.7 of the Zoning By-law or contact the Planning or Building Department.

**Q: Where is the required setback measured to on a building?**

A: The setback is measured from the respective property line to the closest outside wall.

**Q: There is a power line running through my property. Can I put a building or structure underneath it?**

A: No. Hydro One requires a minimum 15 ft. separation between hydro lines and any construction. For more information or to schedule an on-site assessment, contact Hydro One at (888) 871-3514.

**Q: How do I determine the location of the high water mark?**

A: The high water mark is usually taken to be the line where the land-based vegetation ends. If in doubt, a Building Inspector may be able to assist you.

## **SHORE ROAD ALLOWANCE**

**Q: Can I build on the shore road allowance in front of my property?**

A: If you do not own the adjacent shore road allowance, you may be permitted to build stairs or other means of pedestrian access, a deck, dock, or pump house. A boathouse is only permitted if you own the shore road allowance, and the location and setbacks of this will depend on the zone. Contact the Building Department to determine if your proposed project would be permitted and if a building permit is required.

**Q: I would like to purchase the shoreline road allowance in front of my property. Can I do this?**

A: You can apply to the Township to purchase the shore road allowance adjacent to your property. However, because it is a dedicated road allowance, there is a specific legal procedure that must be followed. The whole process could take 6 months or more to complete and there are no guarantees of approval.

### **MINIMUM DWELLING SIZE**

**Q: What is the smallest size house or cottage that I am allowed on my property?**

A: It depends on the zoning of your property, but generally the minimum size is 74 square metres (796 ft<sup>2</sup>). Check the Zoning By-law to be sure.

### **SEPTIC SYSTEM (HEALTH APPROVAL)**

**Q: When does a building permit application require a septic system Health Approval?**

A: A Health Approval is required from the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit if you are (1) constructing a new building, (2) adding a bedroom, sleeping cabin, or washroom, (3) increasing the number of fixture units (sink, toilet, bathtub, shower, laundry, dishwasher, etc.), or (4) increasing the total floor area of the building by 15 percent or more.

**Q: I need to replace my existing septic system – do I need a permit and where do I get it?**

A: Yes, you do need to get approval *prior* to installing any new septic system or replacing an old one. This includes greywater leaching pits, leaching pits for overflow from composting toilets (known as a cesspool), septic tanks, tile beds and holding tanks. Contact your local septic installer or the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit at 705-457-1391 for more information and an application form.

### **SEVERANCE/SUBDIVISION OF PROPERTY**

**Q: I would like to sever one or more pieces off my property to sell or give to family members. How do I do this?**

A: Land severance applications are administered by the County of Haliburton. Contact the Planning Department at the County office in Minden at 705-286-1333 for more information and an application.

### **USE OF TRAILERS, CAMPERS & MOTOR HOMES**

**Q: Can I park a camper, motor home or other type of travel trailer on my vacant property and use it as a weekend “getaway”?**

A: No. This is not a permitted use in any zone, except in a designated campground or trailer park.

### **COMPLAINTS**

**Q: I wish to file a complaint about the condition of a property in my neighbourhood. Is there a certain procedure that I need to follow?**

A: Yes, Township by-laws are enforced on a **written complaint basis only**. Telephone calls will not be accepted. The written complaint must include your name, address and telephone number or other contact information. Failure to provide this required information will render the complaint incomplete and it will not be investigated. Anonymous complaints or third party complaints that attempt to hide the identity of the complainant will not be investigated. Where the Township has

determined that a complaint has been filed for a malicious or vexatious reason or as part of an ongoing pattern of harassment, the Township may cease the investigation and close the file.

### **“SORRY, THAT’S NOT MY DEPARTMENT ...”**

The Township is often asked to become involved in matters over which we have no legal authority.

Civil matters such as,

- private right-of-way disputes,
- trespassing, and
- neighbour disputes over property lines, tree cutting or fence locations

are not within our jurisdiction. If the matter cannot be resolved between you and your neighbour, you may wish to consult legal counsel.