

**Town of Groton**  
**1476 Scott Highway**  
**Groton, VT. 05046**

**Building Permit Process Information**  
**September 2009**

**Q1. When are building permits required?**

A1. Whenever a landowner wants to:

- a) Build a structure or make an addition to an existing structure(s). This includes porches, decks and outside chimneys.
- b) Add another structure(s) such as a garage, shed, lean-to etc. (see Q2.)
- c) Replace a burned or fallen part of an existing structure, such as a barn caved in because of the snow load
- d) Establish a home-based business except a day care for less than 6 children
- e) Add a sign for a business or event lasting more than 3 consecutive days
- f) Change the use of an existing structure, such as change a garage to a living room, or a shed to a camp, etc.

on a parcel of land that is in the landowners name. Permit fee money is non-refundable. The approved permit is valid for two years from the posted date.

In addition, landowners must obtain a Highway Access Permit when adding an access to a town road or when altering landings, loading areas, logging roads and farm roads that intersect a Town of Groton right of way. This may be obtained from the Groton Highway Department.

**Q2. What structures do I need permits for?**

A2. A landowner will need a permit for all buildings and structures with the exceptions of:

a) doghouses, b) treehouses, c) fences (see the guidelines in the Groton By-Laws concerning fences), and d) handicapped ramps. A permit is not needed for putting siding (of any type) on a building and interior remodeling- except as stated above in A1f). A landowner is allowed one 8' x 8' shed without requiring a permit. **In all cases, structures must conform to the setback distances as specified in the Groton Zoning Bylaws.**

**Q3. What is the process and how long will it take?**

A3. As indicated below, the process of obtaining a permit normally takes up to 45 days depending on the type of the permit and **construction may not start before a permit has been issued.** The process is as follows once an application is filed with the fee to the Zoning Administrator:

- a) (up to 30 days) The ZA (Zoning Administrator) reviews the application for conformance to zoning Bylaws and will inspect the proposed building location. If not in conformance, the application is denied. By law, the ZA has 30 days to initially respond to a permit, or else the permit is considered approved.
- b) (15 days) If in conformance, the permit application is posted at the Town Hall
- c) If there are no objections, the permit application is recorded by the Town Clerk and a Building Permit is mailed to the permit applicant. This permit must be posted at the building site during construction. **At this time, and not before, construction may begin.**
- d) (15 days) A sign is posted at the proposed building location indicating that a permit application is being processed. This posting is to allow other people to take action if they disagree with the proposed building activity. If an appeal is made, construction must stop.
- e) When construction is complete, the landowner must notify the ZA such that the construction can be reviewed for conformance to the permit application.

**Q4. What if my permit is denied?**

A4. A denied permit may be appealed, a variance, or conditional use may be applied for through the ZBA (Zoning Board of Adjuster), in writing, with an additional \$10.00 processing fee. The ZBA Board has 45 days to respond to appeals, variances, or conditional uses. The ZBA will hold a hearing which is scheduled and notices are posted 15 days in advance. The process takes a minimum of 16 days (some over a year) and in most cases the request is granted.

**Q5. What if I change my building plans during the permit process?**

A5. Notify the ZA as soon as possible.

- a) If a change is made prior to permit approval (A3.c above), the permit may be resubmitted without an additional fee. Based on the type and extent of change, the ZA may decide that process must restart at the beginning (A3.a).
- b) If changes occur after permit approval (A3.c has occurred), based on the extent of the change, the ZA may determine that the permit process must be redone (and additional fee paid) to allow reinspection, public review and the recording of the corrected application. For trivial changes such as building size reduction or changes not visible to abutters, the ZA may decide that the existing permit will suffice.

**If you build without a Building Permit or build other than as described in an approved Building Permit, you will be considered to be in non-compliance of the zoning bylaws and subject to a fine.** In such cases, at a minimum the zoning process must be redone (and additional fee paid) to allow for inspections, public review and the recording of the corrected application. Based on that review, the ZA will determine if subsequent actions are required.

**Q6. What if the building project is not completed within the two year time limit?**

A6. If within a month of the estimated completion period, the building project has not been started and the project definition has not changed, the Building Permit can be renewed for twenty-five dollars. If the building project has been started but not completed, the landowner must reapply for a Building Permit.

**Q7. What if I consider the fees charged for Zoning Permit processing to be excessive?**

A7. The fees for Zoning Permit processing are set by the Select Board. While Zoning appeals are directed to the ZBA, appeals regarding the fees charged should be directed to the Select Board.

**Q8. How do I measure the setback distance from a road?**

A8. The distance must be measured from the edge of the road right-of-way to the proposed structure. The edge of the right-of-way may be assumed to be 25 feet from the center of the road.

**Q9. What about State Permits?**

A9. The Groton Zoning Bylaws only specifies the necessary town building Permit applicability. There are also state permits that are required for building activities and these include septic systems, well drilling, waste water management, lake shore activity, storm water discharge, and Act 250 issues. Information about State Permits may be obtained from Regional Permit Specialists in St. Johnsbury (Tuesdays at 802-751-0127) or Barre (Mon, Wed, Fri at 802-476-0195). Information may also be found at [www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/permits.htm](http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/permits.htm)

**Q10. Where can I obtain additional information and/or forms and/or the Zoning Bylaws?**

A10. Contact the Groton ZA at 584-3015 or at [grotonzoning@fairpoint.net](mailto:grotonzoning@fairpoint.net) Building Permit Application forms and the Bylaws can be obtained at the town clerk's offices or at [www.grotonvt.com/TownOffices/ZoningAdm.htm](http://www.grotonvt.com/TownOffices/ZoningAdm.htm)