Southwest
New Brunswick
Service Commission

Permits and Approvals – What do you need?

Building Permits

The 2015 National Building Code of Canada is now in effect in New Brunswick and any construction work, including changing a building's occupancy (eg. changing a residence to a daycare facility), must meet Code according to the regulations under the Building Code Administration Act introduced in 2021.

Applications for structures that require building permits need to be accompanied by site plans and digital, scaled drawings with design details which show how construction methods being proposed meet the 2015 National Building Code (illustrated guide for simple buildings). Further, once the construction plans are approved and a building permit is issued, a building inspector from the Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission or municipality must inspect the construction work at various stages to ensure that it follows the approved set of plans.

Some construction work, or development activities, are exempt from having to meet Code under the BCAA. These small structures are exempt from needing Code compliant plans or any building inspections. These structures simply require a development permit. For example, construction of accessory buildings (eg. garages, sheds, detached decks) with a total floor area less than 55 square metres (592 square feet)* are exempt from building permits *unless they are the only structure on the property*. Camps or small dwellings up to 58.06 square meters (625 square feet)* in total floor area are also exempt from building permits. (*) Note: The calculation of floor area must include any additional floors, lofts, or basement spaces, and not just the structure's physical foot print.

Development Permits or Approvals

If a small structure is exempted from having to obtain a building permit under the BCAA, it still requires a land use ("development") approval under the Community Planning Act. These types of small structures are not inspected as they are Code-exempt but they require site plans to ensure that local zoning by-laws and other Provincial regulations are not being violated. A development permit or approval verifies that the structure's location and purpose meets all Community Planning Act

regulations. Failure to obtain development approval may result in unintentionally placing a structure in an illegal location, such as inside a required property line setback or the wrong zone. Illegal structures may be forced to be removed at the owners expense and fines can be levied against both the owner and contractor.

Development permits or approvals may be required in cases where no structures are being built at all, such as when the use of land changes from one purpose to another. For example, if an aggregate company wants to convert a farm field to a gravel pit or quarry, it would require a development approval to ensure that local zoning by-laws and other Provincial regulations are complied with and that the development is legal.

