

JUNE 2010

## DEPARTMENT OF CODES & BUILDING SAFETY FLOOD RECOVERY INFORMATION



### GUIDELINES FOR PERMITS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REPAIR OF FLOOD DAMAGED HOMES AND BUILDINGS

The Department of Codes and Building Safety urges you to use extreme caution when re-entering any residence that has been submerged or water damaged during flooding. See our guidelines for Safety Precautions For Residents Returning To Flood Homes.

**A building permit is required prior to making repairs to flood damaged homes and buildings.**

**While building permits are not required for ordinary maintenance and repairs . . . the repair of a flood damaged home or building is far from 'ordinary'.**

While there are no permits required to do the "demolition" and "clean-up" associated with the project (the removal of drywall and damaged carpet, doors, etc.), a building permit is required prior to installation of the drywall and prior to repair of any electrical, plumbing, or mechanical (HVAC) system damage.

#### **How does a building permit benefit the Homeowner?**

In a word: **SAFETY**. A building permit and the inspections that accompany a permit protect you, your family and guests, and future owners. It protects your neighbor. It protects your contractor. It protects the city. Evidence of permits and inspections may be required in an insurance claim or property sale. All of this adds up to a protection of your property's value.



## Who can obtain Building Permits?

A property owner who presently occupies or intends to occupy a single-family residence or a licensed contractor may obtain a building permit to construct or repair a residence. A property owner or tenant of a commercial property can obtain a building permit to construct or repair a building for up to \$25,000, over that amount will require a licensed general contractor.

## Below are some guidelines to help understand the process for permitting repairs for flood damaged buildings or structures.

- You or your contractor will need to come to the Department of Codes Administration, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Metro Office Building, 800 Second Avenue, South to apply for the building permit. Permit Division 615 862-6517.
- At the time of application you must have the name of the property owner, proper street address and/or the tax map and parcel number to insure proper identification of the property.
- When you arrive at the Department of Codes Administration you will sign in to see a Zoning Examiner.
- The Zoning Examiner will enter the permit application information in the computer.
- Some applications may require approvals from other departments such as the Department of Water Services (for assistance with flood plane and stormwater issues and to ensure compliance with FEMA requirements). When this occurs the Zoning Examiners will act as your counselor, providing you with information and a check list that will aid you in obtaining these approvals.
- Once you have obtained all the required approvals, your last step is to visit the Customer Service person where you initially signed in. They will direct you to a permit clerk where you \*pay for and receive your building permit.
- The permit clerk will also include a checklist of the inspections you are required to have made during construction. The inspection division will field check for compliance with Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Energy Code and Gas/Mechanical Codes. When you are complete the work the inspectors will give you a final approval for work you have done and had inspected.
- \* Permit Fees for Flood Repair Permits have been waived **until July 30, 2010** by the Metro Council in amounts sufficient to cover the cost of permits for flood repairs to most homes or small businesses.

## The repair and inspection sequence for flood damaged properties:

- Now that you have your building permit, the next step is to secure the services of a licensed electrical contractor and a licensed HVAC contractor to inspect electrical and/or HVAC equipment which may have been submerged in flood waters.
- Do not install drywall or cover the electrical or HVAC systems until the following has been completed:

- The licensed electrical and HVAC contractors will obtain electrical and/or HVAC permits associated with the repair and reconditioning or the replacement of any submerged electrical or HVAC system or any part thereof. The licensed contractors will complete their work and call Codes for the required inspections and approvals of the electrical work.
- Insulation must then be installed in the exterior walls and floors to meet the requirements of the adopted energy codes. Walls must be insulated with a minimum of R-13 and Floors must be insulated with a minimum of R-19.
- Before hanging the drywall, you will call the Codes Department's Building Inspection Division (862-6550) and request a "framing inspection". Upon receiving our approval of the framing inspection, you are then free to hang the drywall and complete the remainder of the repairs.



### **Calling for Inspections:**

For your convenience (and ours) the Department of Codes & Building Safety has installed an interactive voice response (IVR) telephone service for your use in requesting codes inspections. The number is (615) 862-6555 and it is available for use 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, from any touch-tone telephone. Our Customer Service Representatives will provide you with information on how to use the IVR system when your permit is issued.

### **Special warning regarding homeowner repair permits:**

When a licensed contractor obtains a building permit, the contractor is totally responsible for the construction (including the work performed by subcontractors) to meet all codes. If the construction fails to comply with all codes, their permit bond can be used to correct the code violations.

When an owner obtains his or her own building permit, he or she becomes totally responsible for the code compliance of the construction project including subcontractors and not the contractor.

If you have hired the services of a contractor, have the contractor obtain the building permit.

## **GUIDELINES FOR REPAIR OF ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS EXPOSED TO FLOOD WATER**

If your electrical system, or parts of your electrical system, have been submerged in flood waters you must:

- Have a licensed electrical contractor come inspect your electrical system and to repair and recondition or replace the submerged portions of the system and equipment.
- The electrical contractor will obtain an electrical permit to repair the electrical system
- When repairs are completed the electrical contractor will call the Codes Department for the required electrical inspection.
- All parts of an electrical system (including all electrical devices, outlet, switches, equipment and some wiring) not rated for wet locations, which have been submerged in flood waters will have to be repaired and reconditioned or replaced by a licensed electrical contractor. Repair or reconditioning of electrical equipment should only be attempted when in direct consultation with and following instructions from the equipment manufacturer.
- For more information on reenergizing flood damaged electrical systems see the guidebook "Evaluating Water Damaged Electrical Equipment" provided by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). [www.nema.org](http://www.nema.org)
- Electrical Information 615 862-6560

## **GUIDELINES FOR WATER HEATERS EXPOSED TO FLOOD WATERS**

The Department of Codes and Building Safety urges you to use extreme caution when restarting any Water Heating Equipment that has been submerged or water damaged during flooding. Prior to re-starting any equipment you should have a licensed Plumbing or Mechanical contractor inspect the equipment. Generally the replacement of a residential 50-gallon water heater does not require a permit. It would require a permit if you were to replace the water heater and change the fuel type (example: going from electric to gas or from gas to electric).

**Whether a water heater uses gas or electricity,  
if it was exposed to flood water,  
the unit should be replaced.**

- A new water heater is a relatively small investment, and replacing it is fairly easy to do. If the water heater was more than five years old, the chances are good that a new unit will be more efficient, which will save the homeowner money.
- In a gas unit, valves and controls can corrode and cause it to malfunction. In an electric unit, the thermostat and controls can corrode and cause malfunction.
- In both types, the insulation surrounding the unit will likely be contaminated and will be nearly impossible to disinfect. In addition, the insulation takes a great deal of time to dry and can lead to corrosion of the tank from the outside. Even if water heater components have been cleaned and the unit seems to operate properly, parts may corrode in the future and create a very hazardous condition.
- Both gas and electric water heaters have a pressure relief valve that can corrode and stick after being exposed to flood water. This is a very hazardous condition. Homeowners should be sure, therefore, to replace this valve as well.
- The Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) is the trade association which represents manufacturers of air conditioning, heating and commercial refrigeration equipment. For more information visit the following website <http://www.ahrinet.org>
- Plumbing Information 615 862-6570
- Mechanical Information 615 862-6570

## **GUIDELINES FOR RE-STARTING WATER DAMAGED HEATING AND COOLING EQUIPMENT**

The Department of Codes and Building Safety urges you to use extreme caution when restarting any Heating or Cooling Equipment that has been submerged or water damaged during flooding.

Prior to re-starting any equipment you should have a licensed Mechanical contractor inspect the equipment, repair and recondition or replace the equipment as necessary prior to putting the system back in use.

**NOTICE: The repair and reconditioning of HVAC equipment should only be attempted when in direct consultation with and following instructions from the equipment manufacturer.**

**Guidelines to help determine if replacement is the better choice than repair can be found at <http://www.ahrinet.org>** The Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI) has compiled a list of things for homeowners and business owners to consider when contemplating the repair vs. the replacement of flood-damaged, heating and cooling equipment.

Mechanical Information 615 862-6570

### **A Few Words About Mold:**

- Be aware that mold might be present if your house was flooded.
- Wet items such as furniture and rugs should be taken outside to dry out.
- Remove all drywall that has been submerged.
- Use fans and dehumidifiers to remove excess moisture from your home. Fans should be placed at a window or door to blow the air outwards rather than inwards, so not to spread the mold.
- To remove or prevent mold growth from hard surfaces use commercial products, soap and water, or a bleach solution of 1 – 2 cups of bleach in 1 gallon of water.

**For volunteer assistance and access to helpful resources call Hands on Nashville 615 298-1108.**

**To apply for Federal Disaster Assistance call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362 or hearing impaired 1-800-462-7585.**

### **Codes Department Telephone Numbers:**

**Permit Division — 862-6517**

**Zoning Review—862-6510**

**Plans Review — 862-6540**

**Building Division — 862-6550**

**Electrical Division — 862-6560**

**Gas/Mechanical Division — 862-6570**

**Main Number – 862-6500**

**Department of Codes and Building Safety • 800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, South • Nashville, TN 37210**  
**<http://www.nashville.gov/codes>**