

## How long does it take to get a building permit?

Permit predictability is one of the biggest challenges a developer, or business owner faces when it comes to property development, redevelopment, and tenant improvements. Coordination of materials, contractors, and anticipation of changes along the way require a high level of attention and expertise. We know that time is money for any business, no matter the industry, and that time value of money is always at play. Especially in today's environment with supply chain issues and the pandemic, it is extremely important to stay in contact with the City and other permit issuing agencies.

When it comes to government agencies, process and equity, regulations, codes and the law are what government agencies must abide by. At the same time, it's important to help businesses get operational as quickly as possible. It's good for the business, community, job creation, and the tax base.

The City of Lakewood has review time goals for each type of permit issued. It's also important to keep in mind the stages that a permit goes through, who the players are, and what issues could potentially arise. For example, some permits go through separate agencies such as for sewer, and water because Lakewood does not own those utilities. Here is a list of agencies involved in the permitting process.

- [Pierce County \(sewer\)](#)
- [Lakewood Water District](#)
- Electrical Permits: If your electric service provider is [Lakeview Light and Power](#) or [Puget Sound Energy](#), electrical permits can be obtained from the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries \(L&I\)](#). You may contact them by calling (253) 596-3808 or you may visit them at 950 Broadway in Tacoma. If your electric service provider is [Tacoma Public Utilities](#), please visit their Permits webpage, or contact them at (253) 502-8277. Find your electrical carrier with the [Electrical Provider Boundaries Map](#).

### General Permit Process (all permitting is online)

1. Make sure that you have applied for a [Lakewood business license](#);
2. Make sure to hire qualified contractor(s) – locate contractors through [MRSC Rosters](#);
3. Sign up (and check status) through the [Online Permit Portal](#) (process is typically handled by contractor);
4. [Locate and complete applications](#) to submit through the portal;
5. Apply through Pierce County for sewer service (typically a longer process than Lakewood, particularly for significant users)
6. [Contact appropriate staff](#) members as needed;
7. Respond to corrections as requested;
8. Pay permit fees (permits issued after payment is received);
9. Start work, after permit(s) issued;
10. Complete work and call for inspections along the way;
11. Receive Certificate of Occupancy.

The City of Lakewood will be joining the Pierce County PALS system by the end of 2021. This will allow for more transparency and efficiency in permitting.

**Permit Review Time Goals** (Clock starts upon acceptance of a complete application and/or receipt of corrected plans for the second review)

Permit type	Description	First Review	Second Review	
Building	Change of Occupancy	20	N/A	
	Commercial Addition	30	14	
	New Commercial Building	45	14	
	Commercial Mechanical	20	10	
	Commercial Plumbing	20	10	
	Commercial Remodel	30	14	
	New Single Family Residence	30	14	
	Residential Accessory Structure	30	14	
	Residential Addition	30	14	
	Residential Remodel or Repair	20	10	
	Wall Sign	15	N/A	
	Land Use	Shoreline Exemption	15	10
		Temporary Use Permits	20	10
Tree Removal Permit		10	N/A	
Zoning Certificate/Determination		20	N/A	
SEPA Checklist		120	N/A	
Boundary Line Adjustment		120	N/A	
Design Review		30	14	
Short Plat		120	45	
Public Works	Right of Way	10	N/A	
	Site Development	30	20	

### Typical Timelines in 2021

Building permit timelines are based on the day entered into the system as complete, payment has been taken in and permit number is issued.

First review for single family residential is 4-6 weeks.

First review for new commercial 6-8 weeks.

First review for tenant improvement commercial is 4-6 weeks.

For land use, 20 days from the time that the permit is entered into the system to first comments. It is difficult to put any other goals in place, because there is a great deal of back and forth and each project is unique.

The goal is to review all resubs for planning and building within 14 days.

### **Tips for efficient permitting**

1. Communicate often, and always when there are any changes to the plans or materials. When we go into the field for inspections, the inspector reviews the plans and cannot make approvals if there are deviations from what was approved;
2. Hire professional contractors that are licensed in our area to perform the work desired. Lakewood uses MRSC rosters and you can [find qualified contractors here.](#);
3. It is the contractors responsibility to know the [Lakewood municipal code](#), and applicable building codes – take the time to do the work correctly the first time to avoid corrections;
4. If corrections are needed, submit the second round as quickly as possible, but also take care to include all changes requested, paying attention to the details. Again, communicate often and ask questions if there are clarity issues;
5. We have professional staff with high levels of expertise in their respective areas of work – being respectful to one another, with partners, and the community is what we expect and it goes a long way to getting a project to completion;
6. Each city has their own codes, and adoption schedules for building - just because something is allowed in one municipality does not mean that it is allowed in another.