

## Planning on Building or Renovating?

You will likely need a development permit- here's what you need to know

### ***When do I need a development permit?***

Development Permits are almost always required when doing any construction, including renovations and additions, as well as when there is a new or change in use on the land. Projects that require a development permit include:

- New buildings (ie. residence, garage, shop, commercial or industrial building)
- **Some** agricultural buildings- please call Planning and Development before constructing to determine if a permit is required
- Additions to buildings (including decks)
- Replacement or repair of existing buildings
- Changes in the use or intensity of use of land or building (this includes home occupation businesses)

When you start planning your project, it is highly recommended that you contact Planning and Development at (403) 328-5525 or email [planning@lethcounty.ca](mailto:planning@lethcounty.ca) to discuss your project and determine if you require a development permit and what information may be required to complete the application. The penalty for starting a project without permits is at minimum **double the permit fees**.

### ***How do I apply for a development permit?***

Before you submit a development permit application please contact the County's Development Officer to review what documents are required to be submitted with the application form. Most projects will require additional documentation and requirements vary based on the project. Examples of additional documentation that may be required include: professionally prepared grading plans, building plans and elevations, septic site evaluation report, geotechnical reports, landscaping plan, a stormwater management plan, approval of architectural controls, etc.

Application forms are available both in the County's Lethbridge Office and on their website ([www.lethcounty.ca](http://www.lethcounty.ca)). Submit a completed development permit application form with **all** necessary documentation and applicable fees. Applications missing documents and information are deemed to be incomplete. **Incomplete applications will be deemed refused.\***

\*note: the province's updated Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA) requires that the Development Authority has 20 days to deem a development permit application complete, once a completed application has been submitted the Development Authority has 40 days to make a decision on an application.

### ***What happens once I submit my completed application?***

- The Development Authority will review your application, evaluate the impact on adjacent landowners, consider comments from circulation to other County departments and external agencies, and assess the project's compliance with the Land Use Bylaw. If the application is for a discretionary use, the adjacent/impacted landowners will be notified of the application.

- Once a decision is made by the Development Authority to either approve or refuse the application you will be notified of the decision by mail.
- The Development Authority's decision is subject to a 21-day\* appeal period. Approved discretionary use development permits are advertised in the Sunny South newspaper and both discretionary and permitted use permits are posted on our website at [www.lethcounty.ca](http://www.lethcounty.ca). If an appeal is filed, the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board will start the appeal process.

\*Note: Changes to the province's Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA) have extended the 14-day appeal period to 21 days.

Approved Development Permits come into effect after the appeal period has been exhausted. If a Building Permit is required it also **must** be obtained prior to any construction. Building Permits are issued by Park Enterprises and most projects require some form of Building Permit. The Park Enterprises office is located in Lethbridge and can be reached at (403) 329-3747.

***How long will it take to get my development permit?***

The process of getting a development permit may take up to 6-7 weeks to come into effect. This includes the 21-day appeal period required under the province's new legislation in the Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA).

***What are the fees for a development permit?***

The fees for a development permit vary and are based on the nature and in some cases the scale of the project as well as if any waiver requests are involved. An updated schedule of fees can be found on the County's website or contact them at 403-328-5525.

***I have a development permit, do I need a building permit? Are they the same thing?***

Development permits and building permits are two **different** permits, but both are equally important. A development permit essentially allows for the use of the proposed building on the property and also the location of that building on the property whereas a building permit ensures that the structure meets the Alberta Building Code. Building permits are required for several projects in addition to a development permit. It is strongly recommended that you contact Park Enterprises at (403) 327-3747 to determine what type of permits your project will require. Park Enterprises is the exclusive Safety Codes permitting agency for all development within Lethbridge County. In addition to reviewing and issuing building permit applications, Park Enterprises also issues permits from Electrical, Plumbing, Gas, and Private Sewage Disposal Systems.

***How long is my development permit valid for?***

Development permits in Lethbridge County are valid for 12 months from the date of issue. Exterior construction on the project must be completed in this time frame, however you may apply for a 6 month extension if substantial work has already begun.

**If you have questions about the permitting process do not hesitate to call Planning and Development at (403) 328-5525 or email [planning@lethcounty.ca](mailto:planning@lethcounty.ca).**