

Questions January 22, 2014

Q. How did we fare this year in the number of building permits issued?

A. We just received the year-end report from the Building and Development Dept. and we continue to be encouraged by what we see. For instance, the month of December saw the most residential permits issued (12) since December of 2007 (12). Total residential permits issued for 2013 was 99. For comparison, in 2007, 195 permits were issued and the next year after the housing market collapsed 85 permits were issued.

Q. Is the building department responsible for enforcing the Georgia contractor's license?

A. Yes. When the licensing law went into effect in 2008, Georgia placed requirements into the law that mandates building inspection departments are responsible for ensuring everyone working in their jurisdiction be properly licensed when a contract is entered into with a homeowner. The inspectors can be personally fined if caught allowing unlicensed persons to do work.

Q. Besides general contractors, are sub trades required to be licensed in Georgia?

A. The licensing requirements apply to anyone doing electrical, plumbing or heating and air other than a homeowner doing the work themselves.

Q. How does a contractor go about getting licensed?

A. You can refer to the Georgia Secretary of State website, www.sos.ga.gov, under "Licensing" and complete an online application to take the required test. Builders are required to earn up to 6 credit hours per year to maintain their license and the Building and Development Dept. holds two classes per year for this purpose. You can call the Building Dept. at (706-439-6045) and get on their mailing list to be notified of these classes.

Q. What if I just need some minor repair work done on my house. Do I have to get someone who is licensed to do this?

A. Minor repairs such as replacement of siding, roofing, paint and trim work do not require you to hire a licensed person and a building permit is not required for minor repairs.

Q. Can I still build my own house without having to be licensed?

A. Yes. Owners can build their own homes or facilities for their own use and not for use by the general public. However, if an owner builds and before the two-year anniversary of receiving the CO, sells his own home or facility, he will not be able to build another project for a period of two years after the date of the sale, unless he obtains a license or hires someone who is licensed. If you have any questions whatsoever about whether you need to be licensed or need a licensed contractor, please call the Building Dept. It could potentially save you a lot of headaches down the road.

Q. Is there still an age limitation on a mobile home being brought into Union County?

A. All counties in Georgia had to adopt an ordinance in 2010 to place new guidelines on used mobile homes. Even though the less than seven year age requirement no longer exists, there is a requirement for the home to have a HUD label which can be no older than June 15th, 1976. Now, before a home is moved into or within Union County, an inspection is done prior to the home being moved. The Building Department looks at all aspects of the home including date of manufacture to ensure safety guidelines are met for the person buying the home. So, to answer the question, any home older than 1976 is not permitted to be relocated into or within Union County.