



Community Development Code Division

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FREQUENTLY ASKED CODE QUESTIONS

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: Prior to any soil disturbance, all erosion control measures must be installed in accordance with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Best Management Practices.

BUILDING CODE: All new buildings, including accessory structures, must be built in compliance with the 2015 IRC, 2015 IBC, 2015 IEBC, 2009 IECC, NFPA1 *Fire Code* (2018), NFPA101 *Life Safety Code* (2018). **MUBEC** (Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code)

BUILDING PERMIT LIFE: After the issuance of a building permit the developer has six (6) months to commence project construction. Construction must be complete within eighteen (18) months from the date of issuance.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS: Carbon monoxide detectors are required for new residential buildings and certain other non-residential buildings. Carbon monoxide detectors must be hard wired with a battery back-up. Carbon monoxide detectors must be surface mounted in areas giving access to bedrooms and on each level of the building. Combination smoke/ carbon monoxide units are allowed.

CHIMNEYS: All chimneys must be constructed to meet the minimum standards of the NFPA 211 (2016). General standards for chimneys, fireplaces, vents and solid fuel burning appliances are as follows:

- Interior chimneys must be constructed with a minimum clearance of two (2") inches from combustible material.
- Exterior chimneys must be constructed with a minimum clearance of one (1") inch from combustible material.
- Metal chimneys are not allowed for any solid fuel appliance.
- Clearance from combustible materials 18" from the vent connector.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP): DEP permits are required for any soil disturbance within one hundred (100') feet of any significant wetland or water body.

DRIVEWAYS: A Driveway Entrance Permit is required in conjunction with a building permit for new house construction. If access to the lot is from a State highway, and the lot is outside the Town of Gorham's compact zone, then a State of Maine Driveway Entrance Permit must be submitted with the Building Permit Application.

EGRESS WINDOWS: The maximum sill height above the finished floor is 44 inches. The net clear opening of the bottom sash must be no less than 5.7 square feet, with a minimum width of 20 inches, and a minimum height of 24 inches.

FIRE SEPARATION WALL BETWEEN A GARAGE AND A RESIDENTIAL USE:

Garage protected by sprinklers: The fire separation wall between a garage and a residential use must be 30- minute assembly with all seams taped and all penetrations sealed. The entrance door must have 90-minute fire resistance rating, be self- closing and positively latching.

Garage not protected by sprinklers: The fire separation wall between a garage and a residential use must be 2-hour assembly with all seams taped and all penetrations sealed. The entrance door must have 90-minute fire resistance rating, be self- closing and positively latching.

FLOOD ELEVATION: Any construction or reconstruction around lakes, rivers, or streams, may require a “Flood Elevation Survey.”

FROST DEPTH: Foundations must be placed forty-eight (48) inches below grade.

HEAD ROOM: The minimum head room on stairways is six feet and eight inches (6'- 8"). The minimum ceiling height for habitable living space is seven (7') feet.

INSPECTIONS: Must call for an inspection as needed and the Code Enforcement Office will attempt to schedule as quickly as possible and at the first available opening as the schedule allows.

Foundations: Call prior to backfilling, when all the metal ties have been removed and the holes have been water plugged and tarred, and after the perimeter drains and rock have been installed.

Subsurface Waste Water System (Septic): Call prior to backfilling for 1st and 2nd inspections.

Sewer Connections (House to Street): Call prior to backfilling.

Electric TRENCH or CONDUIT: Done prior to backfilling.

ROUGH -IN INSPECTIONS INCLUDE FRAMING, ROUGH ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING, ARE DONE AS ONE INSPECTION.

Framing and Rough Electrical: Call prior to any insulation and sheetrock being installed.

Plumbing: Prior to any insulation or sheetrock, and during the inspection, a water test or air test with a relief valve must be done. (The test must include all basement piping.)

Insulation: Prior to any sheetrock being installed.

Final Occupancy: Prior to occupancy of the building, a final inspection must be done and a “Certificate of Occupancy” will be issued upon completion.

HAND RAILINGS: Railings are required if there are three (3) steps or more for one and two- family dwellings. All other buildings require handrails for all steps and ramps. The handrail needs to be at least 34 inches to 38 inches in height, measured vertically, with return to a post or wall and be graspable.

GUARD RAIL: Guards must be at least thirty- six (36) inches in height for one and two- family dwellings, guards must be at least forty-two (42) inches in height for all other buildings. Guards must be placed so that no space is larger than four (4) inches. Guards are required for any height that is more than thirty (30) inches above ground or floor level, inside or out. Rails are required to be continuous between floors.

SETBACKS: Setback distances vary according to the zoning district. The front setback line is measured from the road right-of-way line.

SIGNS: Prior to placing any sign on property, a Sign Application must be completed by the applicant and approved by the Town. Off premises signs will not be permitted.

SMOKE DETECTORS: Smoke detectors must be hard wired with a battery back-up. All smoke detectors within 20' of a bath with a shower or kitchen must be photo-electric. There must be one smoke detector in each sleeping area and one on each floor level, including basements and garages.

SNOW LOADS: All structures must be built to withstand a snow load of seventy (70) pounds per square foot, including a dead load of twenty-eight (28) pounds per square foot and a live load of forty-two (42) pounds per square foot.

STAIRWAYS: Minimum stair width is three (3) feet. Treads and risers must be constructed as follows:

Commercial

Risers = 7 inches maximum

Tread = 11 inches minimum

Residential

Risers = 7 ¾ inches maximum

Tread = 10 inch minimum

STEEL: Structural Steel design must be certified in writing and stamped by a professional engineer or an architect. Structural steel design must meet or exceed the 2015 IBC.

TRUSSES: Prefabricated trusses must be certified in writing and stamped by a professional engineer or an architect. Prefabricated trusses must meet or exceed the 2015 IBC.

VENTS: Vents must be installed in crawl spaces, attics, dryers and some cook tops. Bathroom ceiling vents must be vented to the outside air so that moisture does not vent into the interior soffits.

WIND LOAD: Structures must be constructed to withstand a wind load of 90 miles per hour.