

# CITY OF GALENA, ILLINOIS

101 Green Street, PO Box 310, Galena, Illinois 61036



## City of Galena Building Department - Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** Do I need a Building Permit? (ref. Galena Code of Ordinances: §150.04)

**A.** We recommend calling the Building Department at 777-1050 or visiting the Building Department in person to discuss your project. Our staff can quickly determine if you will need a permit. You may also refer to the Galena Code of Ordinances, Chapter 150, Building Regulations, for a detailed explanation of the requirements. The code is available on the city website at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “City Code” in the left margin).

**Q.** Does the Property Owner or Contractor obtain the Building Permit? (ref. §150.04 (B))

**A.** When a contractor is involved, he or she should obtain the permit. This gives assurance to the property owner that the contractor is registered with the city and has liability insurance in case of accidents on your property.

**Q.** What is needed to obtain a Building Permit? (ref. § 150.05)

**A.** Two sets of scaled drawings (1/4” per foot), a site plan with measured setbacks, a plat of the surrounding area (if building a new house or structure), the estimated cost of the proposed project, and disclosure of the planned use and occupancy are all required. The city’s setback requirements can be obtained from the Zoning Department at 777-1050. A printable building permit application is available at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “FORMS” in left margin).

**Q.** Is my property in the Historic District? (ref. §151.20)

**A.** Since approximately 80% of Galena is within the National Register Historic District there is a good probability that your property is within the Historic District. The boundaries of the district are the “original city” as recorded on March 28, 1838 and all subdivisions added to the city prior to December 31, 1859. On October 18, 1969 the United States Department of the Interior listed our Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. A printable map of the Historic District is available at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “FORMS” in left margin).

**Q.** If my property is in the Historic District, are there any special requirements for performing work on my home or building?

**A.** The U.S. Department of the Interior has developed uniform standards for all National Register Historic Districts. In order to preserve Galena’s architectural heritage, these standards have been adopted as law into the Galena Code of City Ordinances. All exterior work on any home within the Historic District requires a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit can be issued. For minor modifications, a Certificate of Appropriateness can usually be approved at the time of application for a building permit. For more extensive or major modifications, you will likely be required to present your plan to the Historic Preservation Commission for review prior to the issuance of any permits. Exterior painting, which does not require a building permit, does require a Certificate of Appropriateness for the colors.

**Q.** What is a Certificate of Appropriateness?

**A.** A Certificate of Appropriateness is required by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior for all National Historic Places. A Certificate of Appropriateness documents that the proposed work was reviewed by the local historic district administrator and meets the historic preservation standards of our historic district. An application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is available at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “FORMS” in left margin).

**Q.** I want to tear down my shed, garage or house – can I do that? (ref. §151.24 (D)2.)

**A.** The demolition of any structure with a footprint larger than 100 square feet and residing within the Historic District, requires an Application for Demolition of a Structure. The process involves a public hearing before the Historic Preservation Commission. Once the property owner completes the application, public notice of the hearing will be distributed by the Building Department.

No demolition may commence until the permit is issued. The process should be expected to take a minimum of four weeks. An Application for Demolition of a Structure is available at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “FORMS” in left margin).

**Q.** Which contractors can work in Galena? (ref. §150.03)

**A.** A contractor who is registered with the city can perform work inside the corporate limits of Galena. Registration assures the property owner that liability insurance is in place for their contractor. Contractors can obtain the necessary registration forms at [www.cityofgalena.org](http://www.cityofgalena.org) (click on “FORMS” in left margin) and register by visiting City Hall with proof of insurance. The annual fee for contractor registration is \$100.

Plumbing and roofing contractors are required to be licensed by the State of Illinois and the City of Galena (ref. §150.13). The Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulations ([www.idfpr.com](http://www.idfpr.com)) oversees the licensing of roofers and the Illinois Department of Public Health ([www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/plumbing.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/plumbing.htm)) oversees the licensing of plumbers.

**Q.** Can I perform my own electrical and plumbing work on my home?

**A.** Property owners may perform their own electrical and plumbing work on their home, but a building permit is required prior to starting any work. Only licensed and registered contractors may perform electrical and plumbing work on commercial or multi-family structures. An inspection by the Building Department is required before any work is covered.

**Q.** Who is responsible for inspection notification? (ref. §150.11)

**A.** It is the duty of the contractor, or owner when doing their own work, to schedule all plumbing and electrical inspections with the Building Department. One working day notice is appreciated. Covering work that has not been inspected will result in the removal of the covering so a proper inspection can be performed.

**Q.** Do I need to put my electrical wiring in conduit? (ref. §150.17 (A))

**A.** Conduit is required for all commercial and industrial wiring within the city limits. Conduit is also required for residential wiring within the “Fire Limits” of the city. The Fire Limits generally covers the downtown area and begins at the northwest corner of Main and Spring Streets (U.S. 20), runs northeasterly along the east side of Bench Street to Meeker Street, then from Meeker back toward the river to Water Street, then along Water Street back to the point of beginning.

**Q.** Can I build a framed structure inside the fire limits? (ref. §150.17(B))

**A.** No. Within the Fire Limits the outside and party walls of any building or structure built, moved or placed there must be composed of brick, stone, iron or other non-combustible material of not less than eight (8") inches thickness. The roof shall be constructed of non-ignitable material as well.

**Q.** What is required to dig in the street or city right-of-way? (ref. §97.25)

**A.** A Street Excavation Permit is required before digging, breaking, excavating or tunneling under any city street. Requirements for obtaining a Street Excavation Permit include: contacting the Building Department or Engineering Department, paying a \$50 application fee, filing a \$5,000 surety bond and filing an application for a Building Permit with required drawings.

Please contact the Building Department at 815-777-10