

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **FOR RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION**

1. **What hours are the Inspection Department Open?** The Inspection Department is open from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. The inspectors are in the office usually from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. and again at 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
2. **Where is the Inspection Department Located?** The Inspection Department is located on the second floor of the Public Services Building at 320 Fountain Circle, which is the northwest corner of Fountain Circle and Williams Avenue.
3. **What codes are the Inspection Department under currently?** The 2003 International Building Code, 2003 International Residential Building Code, 2003 Existing Building Code, 2003 International Plumbing Code, 2003 International Fuel Gas Code, 2003 International Mechanical Code and the 2002 National Electrical Code. Codebooks may be obtained from the [International Code Council](#) at (205) 591-1853.
4. **Who can build a dwelling?** The state law requires that only a properly licensed contractor which holds a current certification through the [Alabama Homebuilders Licensure Board](#) or a currently licensed state general contractor with a license number below 18908 can build a one or two family dwelling. The owner of the property may also build their own residence if they hold title to the property and it is to be their personal residence, which will not be offered for sale for at least a year. The owner acting as their own contractor loses any protection from the [Alabama Homebuilders Licensure Board](#) for any defects. The owner must adhere to all codes and ordinances.
5. **Do I need a permit for accessory structures?** Yes. Accessory structures must be in the rear yard, at least five feet from the side and rear property line, off any easements that may be on the property, and cannot be over two stories. The accessory structures must be at least ten feet from any other structure including the main house. Plumbing in accessory structures is limited to one commode and one lavatory. On corner lots accessory structures must meet the required secondary front yard setback. The secondary front yard setback may be obtained by calling the Inspection Department at (256) 427-5341.
6. **Do I need a permit for a fence?** No. Fences do not required a permit. If the fence is located in the Huntsville Historic District, it must have approval from the Huntsville Preservation Commission. Most fence questions may be answered by the City of Huntsville Traffic Engineer at (256) 427-5300.

7. **How are the setback lines measured?** Setback lines are measured from actual property lines.
8. **When do I need a building permit?** A building permit must be obtained if the cost of the material and labor for such work is in excess of \$250 dollars or structural work is involved in any amount. Painting, wallpapering, fencing, and floor covering exempt from permitting. When in doubt, call the Inspection Department.
9. **Does everybody that I hire have to be licensed?** Yes. If you pay someone to do subcontractor or contractor work, they must be licensed with the Inspection Department. Subcontractors are only licensed to do certain work. Call the Inspection Department to find out if they are licensed to do the work you contracted with them. One phone call can save you a lot of time and heartache.

NOTE: For specific information for properly licensed contractors and sub contractors please contact the Huntsville Inspection Department at (256) 427-5331. Many people have found the [Huntsville/Madison County Builders Association](#) and [Better Business Bureau](#) to be a great resource for builders.