

This information is the most common for how to obtain the necessary permits for your project and is not representative of all the conditions you may encounter.

Building Development Agencies

The Herrity Building
12055 Government Center Pkwy
Fairfax, VA 22035

- ▶ Permit Application Center
2nd floor, 703-222-0801
- ▶ Site Application Center
2nd floor, 703-222-0801
- ▶ Building Division
3rd floor, 703-631-5101
- ▶ Zoning Review
2nd floor, 703-222-1082
- ▶ Inspections
3rd floor, 703-631-5101

Hours of Operation

Monday–Thursday: 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
Friday: 9:15 a.m.–4 p.m.

Health Department

10777 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-246-2201

Website

Publications, forms and other useful information can be found at fairfaxcounty.gov/buildingpermits

All telephone numbers are accessible in TTY by calling 711.

This document is available in alternative formats and languages. Please call 703-222-0801 for more information.



A Fairfax County, Virginia Publication



PERMITS & FEES

You must obtain a building permit for the construction of a wall retaining more than 3 feet of earth. Permit fees vary depending on the scope of your project; to learn more, go to our [website](#) and click on “permit fee estimate.”

Apply Online



Fairfax County’s FIDO system allows you to apply and, in some cases, obtain your permit online. This could save you time and even a trip to county offices. Go to fairfaxcounty.gov/fido to apply.

Contractors must have a FIDO-issued identification number in order to apply. Contact the Permit Application Center to obtain yours.

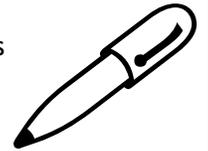
DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

When applying for a permit, you must submit the following documents:

- ▶ [Permit Application Form](#) and equipment worksheet.
- ▶ Building plans (see Page 2).
- ▶ Site-related plan (see Page 3).
- ▶ [Property Ownership Affidavit](#) (when property ownership must be verified).
- ▶ [Permit Authorization Affidavit](#) (when there is no contractor and the applicant is not the property owner).

Who should apply for the permit?

Homeowners may obtain permits in their own name. However, it is strongly recommended a properly licensed contractor pull the permits as the responsible party so the county can better assist in gaining compliance for defective work.



BUILDING PLANS CHECKLIST

When applying for a permit, you must submit two copies of your building plans (three copies if you are on well or septic). The plans must meet or include the following:

- Minimum scale of ¼ inch = 1 foot, fully dimensioned, no pencil.
- Minimum sheet size: 11 x 17 inches.
- Code year used for the design.
- The original signature and seal of the design professional responsible.
- Specifications for construction materials, backfill materials and compaction requirements.
- Cross-sections and structural details.
- The ground slope at the top and toe.
- Method of drainage behind wall.
- Two signed and sealed copies of the design calculations demonstrating a factor of safety of 1.5 for the following: sliding, overturning and global stability

(for global stability, reduce to 1.25 for laboratory-determined soil parameters).

☐ Soil parameters.

Soil Parameters

- ▶ Bearing capacity (2,000 psf maximum assumable).
- ▶ Lateral earth pressure (60 pcf minimum assumable).
- ▶ Friction value (0.35 maximum assumable).

☐ Global stability analysis for the following conditions:

- ✓ Walls with back slope steeper than 4:1 and on unstable soils.
- ✓ Walls with back slope steeper than 2:1 and a height over 6 feet.
- ✓ Walls over 10 feet in height.

If a global stability analysis is required, the analysis will be reviewed by the county geotechnical engineer as part of the building plan review process, see below.

☐ All walls 10 feet and greater in height must meet the requirements of the [Special Inspections Program](#).

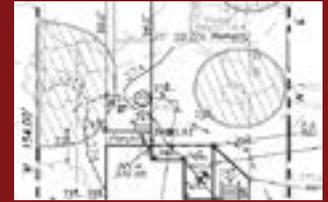
☐ To learn about soil types and other soil-related requirements, go to our [website](#) and search on “soils.”

Using a unique material or product?

You must reference its evaluation report from a nationally recognized listing agency, such as ICC-ES, ATI or UL, certifying it meets the requirements of the building code. **THIS IS REQUIRED FOR SEGMENTED RETAINING WALLS.**

Site Related Plans

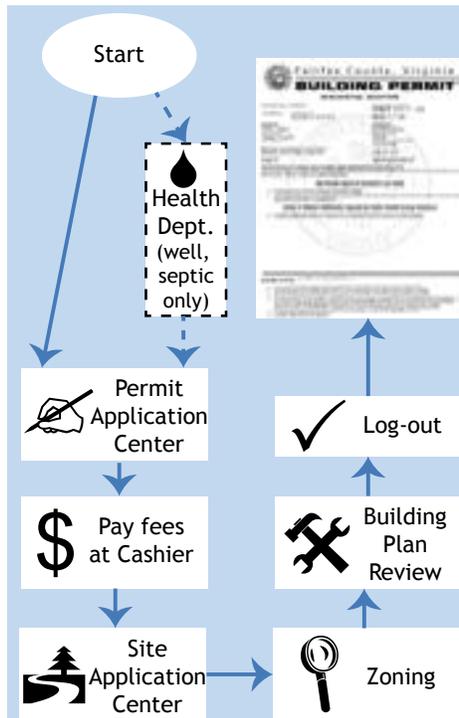
To determine your project’s impact on your property, you must submit either a house location plat, conservation plan or a grading plan depending on disturbed area and other effects the project will have on the site. For more information, see our [Site-Related Plans](#) publication or contact the Site Application Center.



PERMIT PROCESS

When applying for your permits, bring the required documentation listed on Page 1 to the Permit Application Center or you may begin your process online at fairfaxcounty.gov/fido. See below for more information.

- ▶ When you arrive at the county, staff will direct you through the multiple-agency review process. Use the chart to the right to help guide you.
- ▶ Permits for retaining wall less than 4 feet can usually be obtained in one day.
- ▶ If your property contains a well or septic system, you must begin your process at the Health Department.
- ▶ Vienna and Clifton residents require initial approval from their respective towns.



Regulations...

Building Code & Ordinances

- ▶ Virginia Residential Code (see our [website](#) for the current edition)
- ▶ Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance (for setbacks, height and size limitations)

Covenants

Contact your homeowners association for building requirements and restrictions specific to your subdivision.

INSPECTIONS

You are required to obtain inspections from the county for your retaining wall. Please review the following when requesting an inspection.

- ▶ The county approved site-related plan and building plans must be available on the jobsite.
- ▶ The county must be notified when the stages of construction are reached that require an inspection.
- ▶ Ladders, scaffolds and other equipment necessary to access construction must be provided to the inspector.
- ▶ Before you begin excavating, contact Miss Utility at **811, TTY 711**.
- ▶ To schedule an inspection,
 - ✓ Call **703-631-5101, TTY 711**
 - ✓ Online at fairfaxcounty.gov/fido
 - ✓ Use the Fairfax County smart-phone app. Go to your app store to download.