



## Residential Garages, Sheds, and Playhouses

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Warren County Department of Building Inspections  
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Permit applications accepted Monday-Friday 8:00-4:00

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This publication provides guidelines for constructing residential garages, tool sheds, storage sheds, and playhouses in accordance with the *2012 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code*. The requirements herein are the most common and are not representative of all conditions you may encounter when constructing a garage, shed or playhouse.

### PERMITS REQUIRED

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You must obtain permits for the construction of a residential garage, shed or playhouse. Listed below are the types of permits required, depending on the complexity of the project.

- **Building permit** for all garages and only those sheds and playhouses greater than 256 square foot in area.
- **Electrical permit** for all electrical installations in all garages, sheds and playhouses regardless of size.
- **Zoning** for County must have application and fees at time of submittal, Town approved application required.

**HELPFUL HINT:** You may obtain permits in your own name; however, if a contractor is to perform the work, it is strongly recommended that the contractor secure the permit and be listed as the responsible party. In this way, the County will be in a better position to assist you in gaining compliance with codes if the work is defective. A contractor must be properly licensed in order to obtain a permit.

## **BEFORE OBTAINING A PERMIT**

### **COVENANTS AND DEED RESTRICTIONS**

Covenants and Deed Restrictions are regulations set forth by many homeowners or civic associations. While not enforced by Warren County, some regulations may restrict construction. For more information, contact your association or Circuit Court.

### **ZONING**

Please call 540-636-3354 for information.

### **BUILDING CODE**

The Code of Virginia requires that your new garage, shed, or playhouse comply with the *2012 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC)* which incorporates the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC) for residential construction.

### **MINIMUM CODE REQUIREMENTS**

The items listed below are not inclusive of all the code requirements for garage and shed construction in the IRC.

- All sheds and playhouses are required to be detached from the house. Sheds attached to the house are considered additions. See *Additions* publication for more information.
- Attached garages must be separated from living areas with a minimum of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " drywall applied to the garage side. Garages beneath living areas must have  $\frac{5}{8}$ ", type X drywall applied to the garage ceiling.
- Doors between an attached garage and adjacent living areas must be a  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " solid wood core door, a  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " honeycomb core steel door or a 20-minute fire-rated door.
- Garage floors must be a 4" minimum thick concrete slab with a compressive strength of 3,500 PSI and shall be sloped towards the garage door. The site shall be prepared with 4" of gravel. A vapor barrier (with joints lapped 6" minimum) between the concrete and gravel must be provided for attached garages only.
- All attached garages and all detached garages with electricity must have at least one GFCI, 125-volt, single-phase minimum 15 ampere outlet. All additional outlets must meet the same requirements except for inaccessible outlets such as those serving garage door openers.
- At least one wall switch controlled light must be installed in all attached garages and all detached garages with electricity.
- Fuel-fired appliances and equipment, such as hot-water heaters and furnaces, must be elevated such that the ignition source is a minimum of 18" above the garage floor.
- Fuel-fired appliances and equipment must also be protected from vehicle impact or shall be elevated a minimum of 6'-0" above the garage floor.
- Wall panels at the outside corners of all garages and sheds shall be 48" in width and shall have no window or door openings. Panels shall be sheathed with  $\frac{3}{8}$ " minimum plywood or OSB or other approved materials as listed in Section R602.10 of the IRC. Panel widths less than 48" or with openings within 48" of the

corner shall be designed by a licensed design professional or be equipped with approved methods and products to withstand applied wind load.

- R317.1 Wood joists or the bottom of a wood structural floor when closer than 18 inches require an approved species and grade of lumber, pressure treated in accordance with AWPA or decay-resistant heartwood or redwood, black locust, or cedars.
- Wood siding, sheathing and wall framing on the exterior of a building having a ground clearance of less than 6 inches from the ground require an approved species and grade of lumber, pressure treated in accordance with AWPA or decay-resistant heartwood or redwood, black locust, or cedars.
- Manufactured sheds shall be installed in accordance with the manufactures recommendation as regards to wind, foundation, and anchoring requirements.
- A pre-slab or site prep inspection must be made before the shed is set.
- The permit must be posted prior to delivery of shed or storage building.
- The manufacturers' data plate with registration number of inspection agency must be mounted or attached to manufactured structure for a final inspection.

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE SUBMITTED ALONG WITH THE COMPLETED BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION FORM**

All application submissions for a garage or shed must include the following:

- A copy of the existing well and septic system that can be obtained from the Warren County Health Department. A walk-over may be required if a copy of the existing system is not available or if determined by the building inspections department.
- Two sets of building plans or manufacturer's plans for pre-fabricated structures (see below for requirements).
- If property is in the Town of Front Royal, an approved zoning permit application from Town of Front Royal Planning & Zoning.
- If property is in county, one copy of the house location plat. If you do not have a copy of your house location plat, review your loan closing documents, contact your mortgage lending institution, or research records at the Warren County Court House to obtain one. Please note: plats are not available for all properties. House location plats must meet the following requirements:
  - No reduced, enlarged, or faxed copies.
  - The area of the garage, shed or playhouse drawn to scale.
  - Note the actual square footage or overall dimensions of the garage, shed or playhouse.

## BUILDING PLANS

Building Plans must meet the requirements or show the items listed below.

- 2 Complete sets of building plans.
- Minimum scale of  $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$ ; all dimensions must be shown.
- Minimum sheet size:  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$ , no pencil.
- Code year used for the design (see above).
- Name, address, and occupation of the building designer.
- If plans are prepared by a Virginia Registered Design Professional (RDP), they must bear the original seal, signature, and date.
- List of material specifications including, but not limited to, grade and species of lumber, concrete strength, and steel strength.
- List of design load criteria: live load, dead load, snow load, wind load and bearing capacity (for Warren County: ground snow load = 35 PSF and wind speed = 90 mph).
- Foundation plan.
- Structural framing plans of the floor and roof accurately detailing all members, sizes, span lengths, and spacing.
- Structural details of connections.
- Evaluation report from an approved testing laboratory and load calculations for all adjustable columns.
- Typical wall section with sheathing thickness and type (special products or devices require an evaluation report from an approved testing laboratory).
- Elevations (front, sides, and rear) indicating window and door dimensions.
- Any pre-engineered or pre-constructed shed purchased from a home center store, lumber company, or similar, requires detailed drawings and a complete plan review.