

## **General Information**

The City of Port Neches has adopted and is under the current 2006 International Building, Mechanical, National Electrical, Plumbing, and Gas Codes published by the International Code Council, Inc. The requirements listed in this hand-out are based on these codes and their amendments as presented in the Port Neches City Ordinances. All code books are available for reference at the Hebert Public Library, 2025 Merriman Street in Port Neches.

**The information included in this hand-out consists of some problem areas that we have had in the past and in no way represent all of the code requirements. These are only a few of the minimum requirements in the building code.** If you have any questions that aren't answered in the following pages, please contact the Inspection Dept. at City Hall (409)719-4214.

Inspection Dept. Hours

### **On-Site**

On-site inspections are conducted Monday thru Friday between the hours of 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. There will be no inspections on holidays or weekends.

### **In-Office**

The Inspection Dept. at City Hall is open Monday thru Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. to issue permits and answer questions.

**Telephone: (409) 719-4205.**

## **Prior to Construction**

- The City of Port Neches requires contractors to post bond and required licenses before they perform any of the following types of work: Building, Electrical, Plumbing, and Mechanical
- A plot plan and two (2) sets of blue prints shall be turned into the Inspection Department for review before any permits are issued
- Display a sign with the house number on it visible from the street
- Contact the Water & Sewer Supervisor for water & sewer service locations:  
**(409) 719-4279**
- A portable restroom and a dumpster shall be on premises throughout construction.

- A certificate of occupancy shall be issued by the Building Official before a new building can be occupied or before an existing commercial building has had a change of occupancy.
- Landlord or owner of rental or commercial property is prohibited from doing plumbing, electrical, and mechanical work for which businesses are required.
- ADA requirements are governed under the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (512) 463-3211.
- Applicable Storm Water Permits may be required.

**REQUIRED INSPECTIONS:**

**1. Plumbing**

- Rough-In
- Sewer/Water Service Lines
- Top Out & Gas
- Final Plumbing & Gas

**2. Building**

- Foundation
- Framing
- Final

**3. Electrical**

- Temporary Pole
- Rough-In
- Final

**4. Mechanical**

- Rough-In
- Final

**Requesting an Inspection**

Contact the Inspection Dept. at **(409) 719-4214** to request an inspection. **Failure to call for a required inspection could result in a fine of not more than \$500 per day per violation.** Inspections called in before 10:00 a.m. will normally be made that morning. Inspections called in before 2:00 p.m. will normally be made that day. Any calls for inspections after 2:00 p.m. may be made the following work day.

If the inspector arrives at the job site for a *scheduled* inspection and the contractor has not completed all of the requirements for the inspection, a re-inspection fee may be required before any other inspections are made.

### **Rough & Mechanical**

Top-out, rough, gas, and framing inspections should be called for at the same time if at all possible.

### **Windstorm Inspections**

The City encourages contractors to participate in the Windstorm Inspection Program; their inspections are in addition to and not in place of City Inspections. The State Board of Insurance Windstorm Inspection Program telephone number is (409) 892-4677.

### **Plumbing Inspections**

#### ***Plumbing Rough-In Inspections:***

#### **House/Building Sewer**

1. All sewer and vent pipe shall be schedule 40 PVC
2. Building sewer lines must have water up past the highest fitting.
3. There must be at least one 3 inch vent.
4. Floor drains must have a pea trap and drain into the building drain or to the outside.
5. Washing machine must be trapped and vented separately.
6. Island sinks must be loop vented or have a 3 in. trap and drain.
7. Do not cover any pipe or fittings until you have received a rough-in inspection.

#### **Water Lines**

1. Type "K" or Type "L" roll (soft) copper only is allowed in the slab.
2. No fittings allowed in the slab.
3. Water lines must be sleeved if there is any possibility that the line may come in contact with concrete.

4. The service line to the house can be copper or schedule 40 PVC and must have a cutoff valve on the house side of the water meter, but not in the City's meter's box.
5. Only in certain situations can the water service pipe be placed in the same trench with the building sewer:
  - a. The bottom of the water service pipe at all points shall be at least 12 in. above the top of the sewer line at its highest point.
  - b. The water service pipe shall be placed on a solid shelf excavated at one side of the common trench.

***Sewer Inspections:***

1. Contact the Water & Sewer Supervisor for proper service location: **(409) 719-4279**.
2. Service lines must be schedule 40 PVC only.
3. Two way clean-out must be within 3 ft. of the building and no more than every 100 ft. thereafter.
4. The sewer line must be tied into the sewer main by the plumber before calling for an inspection.
5. Pipe and fittings must be exposed for inspection.

***Top Out Inspection:***

1. All vents must be extended through the roof.
2. There must be at least one 3 inch vent.
3. Washing machine drains must be trapped and vented separately.
4. Water must be up to the highest second floor fitting that will carry water.
5. A 15 psi pressure test must be on the gas line.
6. City water pressure should be on the water lines if possible.
7. Type "K", Type "L", or Type "M" rigid (hard) copper is allowed above the slab.

8. Nail guards must be placed over each stud, plate or joist where there is less than 5/8 inch of wood between the water lines and/or vents and the edge of the stud, plate, or joist.
9. If the gas water heater is located in the garage, it must be elevated to a point where the burner is 18 inches above the garage floor.
10. A 2 inch trap shall be installed for the mechanical primary drain.
11. Water lines for a house on piers shall be insulated under the house.
12. The pressure and temperature relief valve must have a separate 3/4 inch drain and must extend to within 6 inch of an indirect waste receptor or run to the outside, and within 6 inch of ground level (must be copper, CPVC, or galvanized line if 90-degree fittings are used).
13. If drain pan is required, drain line must be size of drain outlet but no smaller than 1 inch and ran to the outside separately or to an indirect waste receptor.

***Final Plumbing and Gas Inspection:***

1. All fixtures are to be installed with valves on both the hot and cold water line.
2. All sinks and lavatories are to be trapped.
3. City water is to be tied in and turned on.
4. The water heater(s) must be installed with metal drain pan, and drain line extending out to the outside.
5. A 5 psi pressure test must be on the gas line before the City will call the gas company to have the gas turned on.
6. All gas valves not having a gas fixture attached shall have a cap on the end of the valve.
7. The gas heating system must be installed and properly vented.
8. Smoke detectors must be installed (at least one upstairs and one downstairs).
9. Venting for the gas water heater and gas heating system must be double wall vent pipe and extend at least 24 inches above the high side of the roof where it passes through.

10. The water heater vent shall be a minimum length of 5 feet from top of flue to vent cap.
11. Sanitary sewer clean-out must be capped and visible.
12. Safety pans and relief valve waste:
  - a. When water heaters are installed in such areas that leakage could cause water damage to the building or injury to the building occupants, the heater shall rest in a galvanized steel or other metal pan of equal corrosive resistance having a thickness at least equal to 24-gauge galvanized sheet steel (1/16 inch high-impact plastic pans can be used under electric water heaters only).
  - b. Safety pans shall be no less than 1 1/2 inch deep and shall be of sufficient size and shape to receive all drippings from the heater.
  - c. Safety pans shall be drained by an indirect waste pipe no less than 1 inch diameter or the diameter of the outlet of the required relief valve, whichever is larger.
  - d. The pan drain shall extend full-size and terminate over a floor drain or extend to the exterior of the building and terminate no less than 6 inches or more than 24 inches above grade.
  - e. The discharge from the relief valve shall be piped full-sized separately to the outside of the building or to another approved location so that any discharge can cause no personal injury or property damage and can be readily observed by the building occupants.

### **Building Inspections**

#### ***Foundation/Slab Inspections***

1. Remove vegetation from the subgrade.
2. All exterior beams are to be at least 6 inches into undisturbed soil.
3. All interior beams should be placed at least on undisturbed soil.
4. On a one-story building, the exterior grade beam is 20 inches deep and 12 inches wide.

5. A two-story building requires a 24 inch grade beam depth and a 15 inch width.
6. Patio beams are to be at least 18 inches deep due to the fact that many of the homeowners have enclosed this area in the past.
7. The slab must be at least 4 inches in depth and must be reinforced with at least 6-gauge wire mesh.
8. All exterior beams must have either 4-5/8 in. rebar or 5-1/2 in. rebar and placed with at least 1 in. of concrete around each rebar.

***Framing Inspections:***

1. All bottom plates are to be treated wood.
2. Roof supports/rafter perlin are to be braced off of load bearing walls perpendicular to the rafters and not off of the ceiling joists.
3. All spans shall be in compliance with SBCCI span tables.
4. All ceiling and floor joists are to be one piece without splices or overlaps.
5. Rafters up to 24 feet long must be on a continual piece.
6. Rafters longer than 24 feet must be spliced and a perlin must be positioned directly under the splices and supported off of a load bearing wall.
7. Ceiling and floor joist not sitting directly on a wall or a header should be connected to the wall or header with a joist hanger properly sized for the joist.
8. Any floor or ceiling joist that is cut to provide an opening for a ladder, recessed lighting, etc., must be strengthened by doubling the header that it is connected to and doubling the joists that the header is connected to, and joist hangers must be used to secure the joist to the header.
9. Headers over 12 feet in length must have 1/2 inch plywood glued and nailed between the 2x12 wood members.
10. Headers over 16 feet in length must be engineered to support the load.
11. Stairways:
  - a. The rise cannot be more than 7 3/4 inches and tread, exclusive of nosing, shall be not less than 9 inches wide.

- b. Stairways that make a 90-degree turn must maintain a 9 inch tread within 12 inches of the turning radius.
  - c. Railing shall be spaced where a 4 inch sphere cannot pass through.
12. Fire stopping shall be provided in all walls and partitions to cut off all concealed draft openings both horizontal and vertical and to form a fire barrier between floors, and between the upper floor and the roof space.
13. Truss systems may be used but only if designed by a structural engineer and are plant fabricated (a set of prints must be submitted to the City with the engineer's seal and notation that the truss system does meet the Standard Building Codes).

### ***Final Inspection***

1. All sidewalks required in the City right-of-way must be installed.
2. Sidewalks are to be 42 inches wide, 4 inches deep, and 5 feet back from the curb, with 6-gauge wire mesh.
3. If the curb has been damaged during construction, it must be repaired.
4. All curbs that become part of a driveway shall be removed and repoured as part of the driveway with the pour including maintaining the flow of the gutter line.
5. All building material and rubbish shall be removed by permit holder before a final occupancy will be given.
6. House numbers must be installed and visible from the street.
7. The final electrical inspection must have been made.
8. Fireplaces:
  - a. Fireplace chimneys must be complete and at least 2 feet higher than any part of the roof or building within 10 feet horizontally of such chimney.
  - b. The hearth in front of the fireplace shall extend at least 16 inches and at least 8 inches beyond each side of the fireplace opening if the opening is less than 6 sq. feet.
  - c. The hearth in front of the fireplace must be 20 inches in front and at least 12 inches beyond each side of the fireplace opening if the opening is 6 sq. feet or more.

- d. Masonry chimneys shall be supported on properly designed foundations of masonry or reinforced concrete.
  - e. Noncombustible material having a fire resistance rating of not less than 3 hours may be used to support masonry chimneys where such supports are independent of the floor construction and the load is transferred to the ground.
  - f. Masonry shall not be supported on combustible construction.
9. Heating Equipment:  
*Attic Installation:* "Every attic or furred space in which mechanical equipment is installed shall be accessible by an opening and passageway as large as the largest piece of the equipment and in no case less than 22x36 in. continuous from the opening to the equipment and its controls. The opening to the passageway shall be located not more than 20 feet from the equipment measured along the center line of such passageway. Every passageway shall be unobstructed and shall have solid, continuous flooring not less than 24 inches wide from the entrance opening to the equipment. On the control side and other sides where access is necessary for servicing the equipment, a level working platform extending a minimum of 30 inches from the edge of the equipment with a 36 inches high clear working space shall be provided..."

## **Electrical Inspection**

### ***Electrical Code Requirements***

#### **Residential Wiring (Homeowner):**

1. Contact electric company for meter location and meter can.
2. Take out electrical permit before starting.
3. Three inspections required:
  - a. Temporary Pole Inspection: circuits are required to be G.F.I. protected.
  - b. Rough-in Inspection: must be called for before adding insulation or covering inside walls or ceilings.
  - c. Final Inspection: all wiring should be completed with fixtures, receptacles and smoke alarms, and the meter loop should be complete and ready for electric company to hook-up.

## **Guidelines for Wiring:**

1. All wires must be #12 or larger (12-2-w/ground) Romex.
2. No single wires unless in conduit.
3. No less than two circuits in kitchen, receptacles only.
4. No kitchen lights on receptacle circuits.
5. One circuit for the dishwasher (garbage disposal can be added to this circuit).
6. Two circuits in laundry room - washer on separate circuit, circuits to bathrooms shall serve only bathroom plugs (no other rooms).
7. No more than eight outlets per circuit, lights and plugs or combination (switches do not count).
8. No junction boxes in inaccessible places (between ceiling and upper floor, where you cannot get to them); you have to get to junction boxes without removing any part of the structure, building, floor, wall, ceiling, etc.
9. Wires must be run within 18 in. clearance between joists and rafters or along rafters, joist, or braces (do not cut across unless you drill through joist).
10. Ground fault receptacles must be on bathroom plugs, outside plugs, garage plugs, and all kitchen receptacles.
11. Garage appliances (freezers, refrigerators and garage door openers) do not have to be on G.F.I.
12. One ground fault receptacle will protect four other receptacles wired down from it.
13. G.F.I. breakers are acceptable for a circuit.
14. Metal boxes (equipment ground wire) must be connected to the ceiling box, plug, switches and box (visible during rough inspection).
15. Storage areas and attic must have at least one light with switch at entrance.
16. Smoke alarms are required.

17. Use Romex connectors on breaker box or recessed fan, recessed light fixtures and any metal box that does not have a Romex clamp.
18. Use bushings on nipples where the wires come through the wall into breaker box, bushings for metal conduit shall use bonding nuts.
19. Running wire from main panel to another panel (breaker box):
  - a. If you use PVC, pull in an equipment ground: 2 hot wire, 1 neutral and 1 equipment ground.
  - b. If you use cable: a 3-conductor cable with ground is required (i.e. 4/3 with ground).
20. Breaker boxes cannot be located in closets.
21. Conduit raisers through the roof must be 2 inches rigid conduit, and the distance from roof to weatherhead is a minimum of 28 inches to a maximum of 42 inches.
22. Six breakers or switches are allowed before a main disconnect is required.
23. A main disconnect must be installed at the meter.
24. A main disconnect is required on the outside for an inside breaker box.
25. No service smaller than 100 amps - #4 wire on residences.
26. All new service requires 1/2 in. x 8 ft. copper ground rod.
27. All Romex run on the outside walls has to be in conduit or thin wall tubing.
28. No service entrance cable (SEU) or any other cable is allowed for services.
29. Owners cannot do their own work on commercial or rental property, a licensed contractor is required.
30. All ranges, free standing ovens, cook tops and dryers shall be fed from a 4-wire conductor.

## **Building Regulations**

### **Schedule of Permit Fees:**

On all buildings, structures or alternations requiring a building permit, as set forth in Section 105.1, the fee shall be paid as required at the time of filing the application in accordance with the following schedule:

<b>Total Valuation</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Up to \$999.99	\$10.00 for any amount up to \$999.99
\$1,000.00 to \$49,999.99	\$15.75 for the first \$1,000.00 plus \$5.25 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$49,999.99
\$50,000.00 to \$99,999.99	\$273.00 for the first \$50,000 plus \$4.20 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$99,999.99
\$100,000.00 to \$499,999.99	\$483.00 for the first \$100,000 plus \$3.15 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof, up to and including \$499,999.99
\$500,000.00 and up	\$1,743.00 for the first \$500,000 plus \$2.10 for each additional thousand or fraction thereof

**Moving Fee:** For the moving of any building or structure, the fee shall be \$150.00. This fee is in addition to any building permit fee.

**Demolition Fee:** For the demolition of any building or structure, the fee shall be \$50.00.

**Plan Check Fee:** When the valuation of the proposed construction exceeds one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) and a plan is required to be submitted, a plan check fee shall be paid to the City. Said plan check fee shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the building permit fee. Such plan check fee is in addition to the building permit fee.

### **Unlawful use of license; aiding or abetting violation.**

- a. It shall be unlawful for an air conditioning contractor to lend his license or to take a permit for air conditioning work in his name for the use of any other person, or to allow the use of his name, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of obtaining a permit.
- b. It shall be unlawful for any person, owner, agent, or occupant of any building or premises to aid or abet any air conditioning contractor in the violation of this chapter or to connive in its violation. (Ord. No. 1998-09, §5.13, 6-4-1998)

## **Persons who may obtain permits; licensing of contractors.**

- a. It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in the business of refrigeration, air conditioning, heating and ventilation without first having procured a state air conditioning and refrigeration contractor's license from the state department of labor and standards. This license, along with the certificate of insurance required by the state, must be presented to the city with the application and appropriate fees in order to receive the required permit for the work.
- b. Nothing in the mechanical code shall be construed to prevent a person from doing air conditioning, heating, ventilating and refrigeration work himself on his own residence which is owned and occupied or to be occupied by him as his homestead immediately upon completion of such residence so long as he complies with all of the other provisions of the mechanical code. This exception shall be construed to mean an individual owner (not a firm, co partnership or corporation) who actually does the labor himself. (Ord. No. 1998-09, §5.14, 6-4-1998)

## **Permit fees**

Fees for permits issued under the mechanical code are as follows:

1. Initial fee: For issuing each permit, \$11.00.
2. Additional fees: The fee for inspecting heating, ventilating, ductwork, air conditioning and refrigeration systems, and boilers shall be \$11.00 for the first \$1,000.00 or fraction thereof of valuation of the installation, plus \$2.00 for each additional \$1,000.00 or fraction thereof. (Ord. No. 1998-09, §5.15, 6-4-1998)
  - a. **Water tap fees; fire hydrant and sprinkler system connection fees; sewer tap fees.**
  - b. Each consumer requesting installation of water and sewer connections shall pay to the city, prior to the initiation of the installation of such connection, the following charges:
3. Water tap permit fees.
  - a. 5/8-inch x 3/4-inch water meter... \$500.00
  - b. 1-inch water meter... \$600.00
  - c. The fee for all meters one and one – half inches or larger shall be the cost of the meter, plus installation costs, plus 50 percent.

- d. Should the tap require the payment to be cut, the fee shall be the costs of meter, labor and material to install it, plus ten percent.

4. Special fire hydrants and sprinkler systems connections.

- a. Special fire hydrants and sprinkler systems connections will be made at the consumer's request and at the consumer's cost. This cost shall be the city's cost plus 50 percent and the connection shall be the property of the city.
- b. All water taken by a customer from the fire hydrants or sprinkler system shall be used solely for fire protection purposes, unless the water is metered. Charges for water that may be used from metered fire hydrants and sprinkler systems shall be paid at the regular rates stipulated in section 114.32.
- c. A \$1,000.00 deposit shall be paid for use of a fire hydrant meter. The customer shall be responsible for damages and/or the replacement cost of the meter. The customer shall be responsible for any damage to the hydrant.
- d. In no event shall the city be held liable for the loss of pressure in any lines used to serve fire hydrants, sprinkler systems or ordinary water service to a customer.

5. Sewer tap permit fees.

Sewer tap permit fees shall be as follows:

- a. 4-inch sewer tap fee... \$325.00
- b. 6-inch sewer tap fee... \$425.00

6. Extensions to individual lots.

When water and sewer service is not available to a lot located on a street of the city and the owner desires water and sewer service, the owner may request such extension after paying the calculated current rate of the installation cost for the water and sewer improvements across his property, as well as building permit fees for the proposed building. The city will then extend water and sewer service across the lot upon which the building is to be constructed.

7. Taps crossing county or state right-of-way.

When water and sewer service is available to a lot but the tap will cross a county or state right-of-way, the owner may request such tap after paying the calculated current rate of the installation cost for the water and sewer tap, as well as building permit fees.

**Building Permit Fees**

**NEW HOMES (By Square Footage)**

Living	\$65.00 per sq. foot
Garage	\$55.00 per sq. foot

**ADD ON TO EXISTING STRUCTURE (By Square Footage)**  
(Prices same as above)

**SWIMMING POOLS, CARPORTS, PORTABLE BUILDINGS, DRIVEWAYS,  
SIDING**

(Based upon the valuation of the job)

**Demolition Permits**

Permit Fee	\$50.00
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**MOVING PERMITS**

Minimum fee shall be \$10.00, plus \$2.00 for each additional foot of width over 10 feet, and \$5.00 for each additional foot over 17 feet of loaded height. Inform mover to notify police fire departments of day, time and route when they will be doing the move.