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Who is Responsible for Scheduling Permits?

The two most common residential items that typically need permits issued by any building department are: water heater change out; or a furnace/air conditioner replacement.

Most of these permits are issued to contractors as only a few homeowners wish to take on the work for themselves.

The process typically starts with your visit to the neighborhood big box home improvement store to purchase a water heater or furnace. Most of the stores have a list of pre-qualified contractors that offer a fixed installation rate.

The next step is applying for a permit. If the water heater or furnace is being replaced because of an emergency, the codes allow for the installation to occur with the permit being applied for on the next business day. If it is not an emergency, the Peachtree Corners Building Department issues these permits over the counter. This means that your contractor can walk in off the street and immediate walk back out with a permit in hand. The permit process takes less than 30 minutes, and rarely is there anyone waiting in line.

The next step, once the water heater or furnace is installed, is to schedule the required inspection. Per the administrative sections of the adopted codes and the city municipal code, the person applying for the permit and performing the work is responsible for scheduling the necessary inspection. This involves the contractor coordinating our visit to your home with you. We cannot access your dwelling without an adult being present.

The inspection typically takes anywhere from five to 30 minutes for furnaces installed in an attic or underfloor space.

However, we have seen a growing trend where the contractors are placing the burden on the homeowner to schedule the inspection after they have completed the installation. The inspection is not only necessary to verify compliance with the codes, but in the majority of cases it is also needed by your homeowner's insurance company.

Scheduling inspections for contractors is not the homeowner's responsibility. Staff have spoken to countless homeowners attempting to schedule these inspections and empathizes with how frustrated the homeowners are with the process.

To rectify this issue, we have started asking the contractors installing water heaters and furnaces to first coordinate the inspection with you, the homeowner, and then secondly to contact the building inspector with the time of the inspection. Our policy has always been to make every attempt to not inconvenience our homeowners. We can typically adjust inspection schedules to meet the time agreed upon between you and your contractor.

I know how inconvenient it is for a homeowner to who must wait for cable, satellite or some other service provider to show up when they have provided you with a 9-hour window of time (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) for their employee to arrive. We can do better for our citizens in Peachtree Corners.

If your contractor asked you to schedule the inspection for a permit that we issued to them, please feel free to decline and ask them to call us at the Peachtree Corners Building Department at (678) 691-1207.

Mike Sargent, Peachtree Corners Building Official, msargent@peachtreecornersga.gov

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