



March 2020

## **Home Improvement Projects**

### ***Hiring a Contractor VS Do-it-Yourself***

If you are thinking of building a deck, finishing a basement, renovating your kitchen, updating the bathroom or any other home project on your residential property, then you will need to decide: Should I hire a contractor or do it myself?

There are many things to consider: Do I need a permit? [You can find that information on the city website](#). If you do not find the answer you need, please call the Building Department at 678-691-1200. If indeed you do need a permit, there are legal requirements for which you or your contractor must qualify.

First, if you decide to do the work yourself, you must be an owner/occupant. In other words, you must own the home, and it must be your primary residence. In any other case you will need to hire a general contractor.

So, let's say you own the home and it's your primary residence, first you must make application for a permit which you can find on our [website](#) or by visiting City Hall, 310 Technology Parkway. (City Hall is open Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.) In the application process you must sign an affidavit stating you are acting as the general contractor for the work to be performed.

This is a legal document that says you will preside over the work including the trades, such as plumbing, electrical, mechanical. Be aware that if you do not do the work yourself, you must hire licensed contractors to perform the work, and they must submit affidavits or apply for permits from the city. You will be responsible for permitting including providing plans to the Building Department, calling for all inspections, and providing a safe working environment.

Of course, not having to pay a general contractor can be a cost-saving endeavor. However, there are hidden dangers. By signing the affidavit, you are saying you are completely responsible for code compliance. The city cannot recommend, or tell you how to complete your project, the city will inspect for code compliance and report code violations only.

Also, there is a matter of insurance for accidents or injuries by you or your subcontractors, if you are acting as the general contractor, you are responsible for providing insurance for the project. This is not meant to be a complete statement of responsibilities, but is provided to give

you an idea of some of the responsibilities and issues that could arise from acting as the general contractor.

OK, after all that maybe you decide you don't want the responsibility of acting as the general contractor, maybe you want to hire a contractor. Typically, after you and your general contractor have discussed the project and came to an agreement on the price and materials, your work is done, at least with the legal aspect of code compliance.

The general contractor is responsible for, permitting, plan review, getting the proper inspections for code compliance, and he or she must be licensed by the State of Georgia, and carry liability insurance (state law) for the project.

As you can see, there is much to weigh when making this decision. As Building Official I have advised those that have asked, to take everything into consideration, not just the initial cost savings of doing it yourself. You have every right as an owner occupant to pull your own permits and do your own work, just make sure you have a clear understanding of the state minimum code requirements and your responsibilities under the law.

**Mark Mitchell CBO, MCP**

**Building Official**

**City of Peachtree Corners, GA**