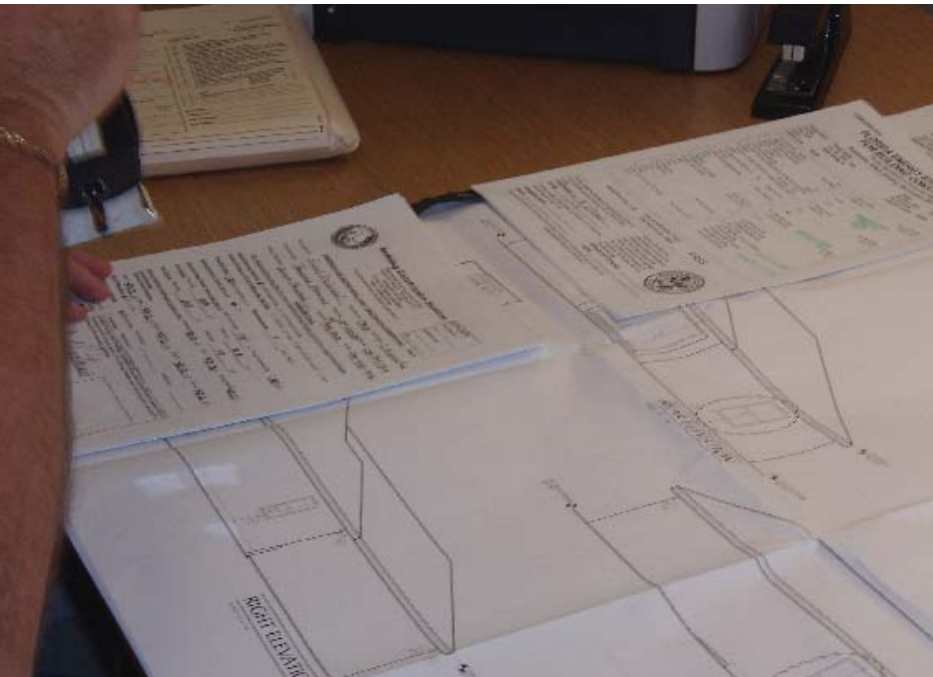




CHARLOTTE COUNTY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES





*Home is that place we go to feel
safe, secure and protected.
Building Construction Services is
here to make you want to come
home to Charlotte County.*

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
18400 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, FL 33948
941-743-1201
www.CharlotteCountyFL.com

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BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

MISSION

**JIM EVETTS,
DIRECTOR OF
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
SERVICES**

“Charlotte County Building Construction Services is dedicated to protecting the life safety and welfare of the citizens of Charlotte County. If it seems that we are obsessive about Building Codes – we are, and with good reason. We saw for ourselves in the recent hurricane season that properly enforced building codes and contractor licensing regulations work.”

The Charlotte County Building Construction Services Department exists to protect the life safety, health and welfare of all of Charlotte County residents. As the beauty of County continues to attract new residents from all over the world, we renew our commitment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the County’s families, friends and neighbors. This increase in population has exponentially increased the demand for the department’s services to support residential and business construction.

Building Construction Services has established and maintains the highest quality of customer services in our five divisions: permitting, plans review, inspections, contractor and occupational licensing and building code enforcement. Our divisions reflect our dedication to County residents and contractors, providing the most highly-trained personnel and state-of-the-art technology.

Building Construction Services partners with the local construction industry and works closely with the local contractors. The Building Oversight Committee, consisting of local contractors and community members, has full oversight of the financial aspects of the department—ensuring that building permit funds are only spent on Building Code Enforcement, as mandated by State Statute. In fact, the department is completely supported by fees for services. This committee also serves as a forum for discussion and trouble shooting the various challenges that face the construction industry and Building Construction Service. The committee meetings are open to the public and participation is welcomed. Call 941-743-1245 for more information.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires communities to maintain a minimum level of floodplain management ordinances for its residents to be eligible to purchase flood insurance. To encourage

communities to exceed these minimum requirements, the NFIP established the Community Rating System (CRS). The flood insurance you pay every year if you live in a flood zone is directly related to how well Charlotte County Building Construction Services, and other County departments, manage construction in a flood zone. The County is scored as to how well they work to minimize flood damage in the County.

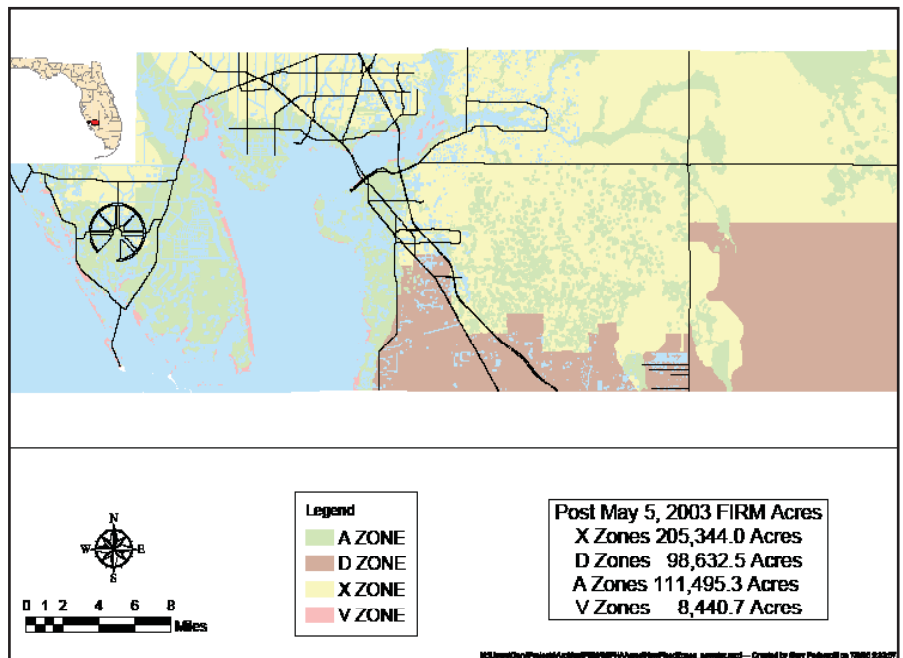
This is called the Community Rating System (CRS). The higher the CRS score, the lower the flood insurance premium. Charlotte County has the highest CRS score in the State and therefore has one of the lowest flood insurance premiums.

The Building Construction Services Department, through a cooperative effort with many other County Departments, has been able to maintain a CRS rating of 5 which provides a 25 percent discount on flood insurance rates for County residents. In exchange for increasing flood preparedness and achieving a CRS rating, the community's residents are offered discounted flood insurance premium rates.

EXPLANATION OF FLOOD ZONES

The map below shows flood zones in the County. Homes in an "A Zone" or a "V Zone" require flood insurance and construction will be subject to stricter building regulations than other areas of the County.

- A – You are subject to flooding.
- D – No analysis of flood hazard has been completed.
- X – There is minimal risk of flooding.
- V – You are subject to flooding and wave action.



CUSTOMER SERVICE



OUR SERVICES:

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday

9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Tuesday - Friday

7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

ONLINE SERVICES:

- ❖ Schedule your inspections
- ❖ Pay your fees
- ❖ Apply for a variety of permits
- ❖ Verify and search for licensed contractors

www.CharlotteCountyFL.com

Building Construction Services strives to live up to the County's mission: To exceed expectations in the delivery of public services. Our primary goal is to serve and protect the community by treating each and every customer with respect and providing the highest level of customer service.

Permitting and licensing can be an unwelcome and laborious process. Building Construction Services staff is dedicated to making each customer's interaction as quick and painless as possible. To assist us in achieving this goal, we offer two convenient locations, a variety of communication methods as well as highly-trained and experienced staff available to answer questions and help customers through the process.

Our offices are open convenient hours to help with permitting, plans review, occupational and contractor licensing and building code complaints. We have two central locations and also offer online permitting. While in Building Construction Services offices, our employees aim to exceed customers' expectations during every interaction.

Our staff currently includes more than 40 Building Code Inspectors, 14 Plans Examiners, 15 licensing staff 30 customer service and administration staff and a six person management team. All review and inspection staff are appropriately licensed by the State of Florida. It takes many years of documented experience in the field, along with the ability to study for, and pass two technical exams designed to test the examinees experience and knowledge to achieve these titles. Many of our Plans Examiners hold degrees in architecture and engineering and some of inspectors have run their own successful construction companies prior to becoming inspectors.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION SERVICES



A dedicated phone center at 941-743-1201, is available to customers during office hours to answer questions, take fee payments and offer help and guidance or an expert to answer questions. Scheduling an inspection is made easy by calling our automated service at 941-743-1966, 24 hours a day.

- Reports:** A customized permit report can be run on our website, selecting permit status, date, contractor, type of permit or date range. Occupational License Reports are available on our site and can be organized by issue date and type of business.

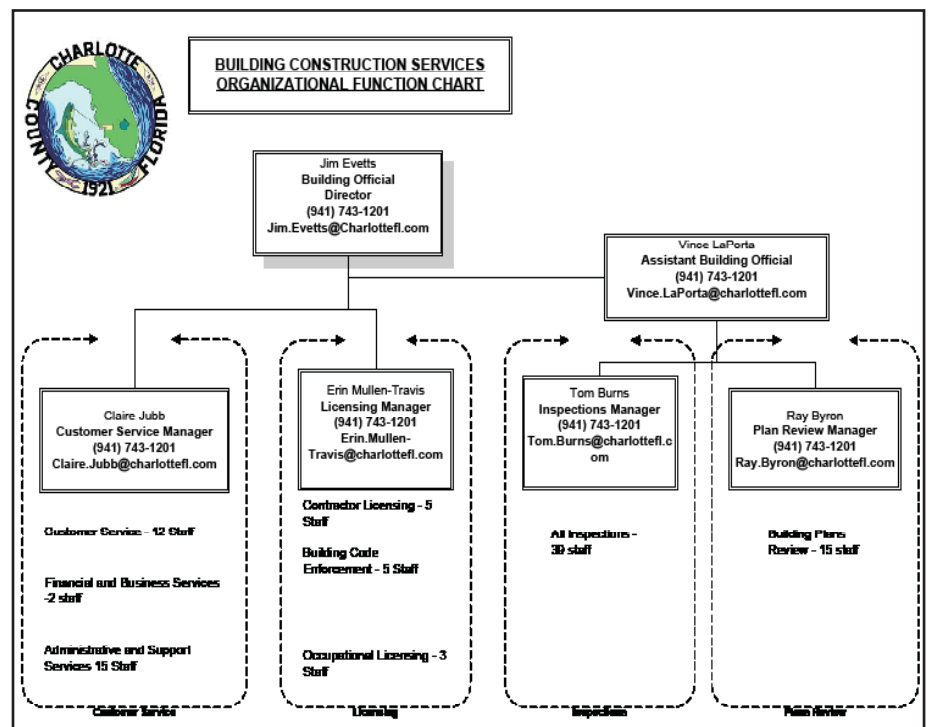
ONLINE SERVICES

Prefer to work online? Visit our website at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com to schedule inspections, pay your fees and apply for a variety of permits. A variety of services are available for your convenience including:

- Fee Payment & Inspection Scheduling:** Request inspections and pay fees for projects underway.
- Permit/Inspection and Contractor Search:** Allows customers to track the status of permit applications and obtain results of inspections for projects that are currently underway. This page can also verify that a contractor is licensed in the County and allows users to search by a contractor's license number. Residents needing services can search for licensed contractor by type of business, including cement, concrete, aluminum, drywall, plumbing and more.

Building Construction Services also offers courtesy phones and public computers in our main office to enable access of online services during regular hours of operation.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



PERMITTING



The Permitting Division is responsible for the acceptance, movement, tracking, pricing and issuance of all permits. From boatlifts to single-family homes and from signs to shopping malls, all permit applications come to life and are moved through the process by the Permitting Division team. In addition to handling the permits, this division also maintains all of the department's support, accounting, administrative and business functions.

WHEN ARE PERMIT APPLICATIONS REQUIRED

The Florida Building Code – which has been adopted in its entirety by Charlotte County, states that:

104.1.1 When Required. Any owner, or contractor who desires to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the technical codes, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the Building Official and obtain the required permit for the work.

So, what does that mean? Whether a homeowner wanting to do work on the home they live in or a contractor, the chances are that the work being done, other than some incidental work, will require some kind of permitting. It may be that it is a quick permit that can be applied for and issued on the same day or can be obtained online. However, it may be a permit that needs plans review prior to approval of the permit.

PERMITS ISSUED

YEAR	NUMBER
2000	15,519
2001	20,083
2002	19,841
2003	22,634
2004	42,984
2005	43,804
5-Year Total	164,865



The main thing to remember is that if there is a question call, e-mail or visit one of the department's offices and our staff will answer all of your questions. Our website has some limited information about what does and what does not require permits, but we understand that sometimes you need a person to talk with, and that is what our customer service representatives do best. Also available on our website are forms, checklists and some information on what type of information needs to accompany the permit application.

By State statute, Building Construction Services is a self-funding department. This means that whatever revenue is received in the form of permitting fees must be spent within the department. Funding from taxes is not used to run the department, other than a small amount used to fund non-building related functions. Monthly revenue, directly related to permitting and the type of permits issued, can range from \$500,000 to \$1 million or more. This money is then used to fund the department and improve the service for customers.

So, what will a permit cost? Generally, a basic building permit will cost \$90. It costs \$40 to take in, process and issue the permit, and around \$50 for inspection. Permits that require more than one inspection, such as a single family home or a commercial project, are charged based upon the valuation of the construction costs. These are determined from national data issued by the International Code Council, which lists

how much each type of construction costs per square foot. To calculate the permit fee, the construction cost is multiplied by 0.004 for residential, and 0.005 for commercial.

Example: A single family home with a construction cost of \$200,000 will have a permit cost of \$800. (This does not cover any additional fees added by other review departments such as Zoning and does not include any Impact Fees.)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"The Building Construction Services Department plays an important role in Economic Development initiatives, in expediting the plans, permits and inspections to assist existing businesses with their expansions and new businesses locating in Charlotte County. The staff is very cooperative in working with the Economic Development Office to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission."

Betty H. Williams
Charlotte County
Economic Development Manager

PLANS REVIEW



PLANS REVIEW COMPLETED FROM 2000-2005

YEAR	NUMBER
2000	30,501
2001	38,518
2002	41,179
2003	49,861
2004	66,105
2005	98,476
5-Year Total	324,640

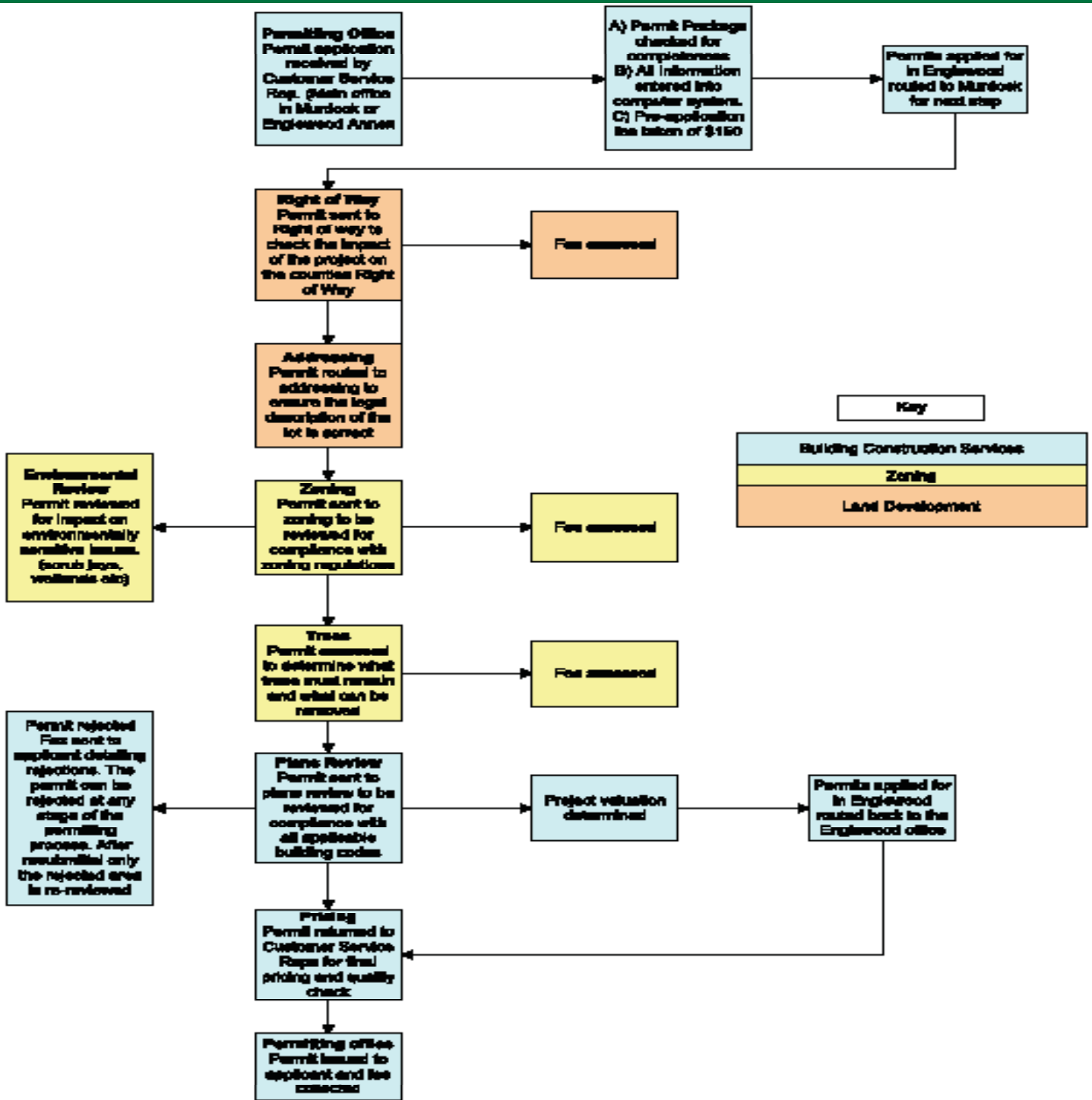
The Plans Review Division of Building Construction Services ensures proposed building meets all applicable life safety and welfare codes prior to construction. The division's objective is to oversee plans review to assure that proposed construction meets safety requirements of the code; and that the process be performed in a timely manner with professional and courteous service to residents and contractors.

The past few years has seen a 200% increase in requests for plans review in the County. Each month more than 2,000 sets of plans are submitted to Building Construction Services. The type of permit application has a direct influence on the time it will take in plans review. Simple permits such as cages and swimming pools only take a few days. More complex permits such as single-family homes take a little longer – up to five days. Large commercial projects require several different reviews such as structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, fire and accessibility and can take several weeks to complete.

Although most plans submitted to Building Construction Services must be signed and sealed by a State of Florida certified Engineer or Architect, plans review is an invaluable check for both the owner and the local community. Our plans examiners look purely at whether a structure meets minimum code requirements and do not take into consideration design or aesthetics, provided an application meets the minimum requirements of all applicable codes.

Among the numerous professional qualifications our Plans Examiners are required to possess, they are current in the dynamic Florida Building Code, local ordinances, fire prevention codes, flood plain management and disability requirements for construction. Some of our Plans Examiners have engineering backgrounds, some are architects and some were contractors giving them the technical expertise and a large pool of knowledge necessary for performing thorough reviews of all aspects of construction.

BASIC SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE FLOW CHART



As shown in the flow chart above, a permit application to Building Construction Services is reviewed by several County departments. An average single-family permit will go through 10 distinct steps before it is ready to be issued.

INSPECTIONS



INSPECTIONS FROM 2000-2005

YEAR	NUMBER
2000	30,501
2001	38,518
2002	41,179
2003	49,861
2004	66,105
2005	98,476
5-Year Total	769,119

The Inspections Division of Building Construction Services makes sure that the construction that is being done matches the plans that have been approved by the Plans Review Division. They inspect the building throughout the construction phase and have the ability to stop the construction should the work not meet all applicable life safety codes.

Generally speaking, building codes are developed by state and local authorities who are actively involved in the construction industry. Their purpose is to provide minimum standards for the protection of life, property, environment and for the safety and welfare of the consumer, public and the owners and occupants of residential and commercial buildings. Building codes are adopted, modified and enforced by local elected officers and government officials.

Building codes are constantly changing and can vary by state, county, city and town. Our Charlotte County Inspectors are responsible for conducting building inspections on residential and commercial structures in Charlotte County for the following disciplines: building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, accessibility and fire protection systems.

The number and type of inspections required for each permit is dependant on what work is being done. A simple permit such as a water heater installation requires only one inspection. A single-family home can require between 15 and 20, and a large commercial project such as a new superstore can require up to 300 individual inspections, as many standard inspections on a project this size are done in stages.



The permit card that is issued with each permit (or if printed online) will indicate the required inspections. Your project is not completed until ALL of these inspections have been passed by an inspector.

To schedule inspections, either call our automated inspection request system (AIRS) on 941-743-1966 or go online at www.CharlotteCountyFL.com.

If you have difficulty using these services, please call Building Construction Services at 941-743-1201, and a customer service representative will walk you through the process.

Although inspections are based upon the work that is completed, there are some other reasons that the inspection may fail. Following the tips below can help prevent this.

1. Make sure that all the work up to the required inspection is completed before calling in for an inspection.
2. Make sure all plans and permits are ON THE JOB SITE at the time of the inspection.
3. Make sure that your Notice of Commencement, if required, is on the job site prior to the first inspection.

4. If the inspector needs to access the property to perform the inspection, either inside a gate or inside the house, make sure that someone is home or the gate is left unlocked. The inspectors will not enter a property without having proper access.
5. Make sure that the subcontractors listed with Building Construction Services are those performing the work.
6. If there is a dog on the property, make sure that it is secured prior to the inspection. Our inspectors will not go onto a property if a dog is loose on that property.

For any questions surrounding an inspection that has been completed, please call the inspector that performed the inspection. The inspector may be in the field when you call, but please leave a message. They return all their messages and are happy to help with any questions.

CONTRACTOR AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT



CONTRACTOR AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES ISSUED

YEAR	CONTRACTOR	OCCUPATIONAL
2000	470	10,485
2001	457	10,451
2002	536	10,750
2003	679	11,581
2004	1,929	14,324
2005	1,171	14,122
Total	5,242	71,713

Building Construction Services licenses and certifies over 17,000 individuals and businesses ranging from architects and contractors to bowling alleys and rodeos. The Licensing Division of Building Construction Services is responsible for making sure that any business, whether contractor related or not, has the correct licenses to operate. They administer the local contractor license program, issue occupational licenses and maintain the information on State contractors working in the County.

CONTRACTOR LICENSES

In order for a contractor to apply for a building permit or to work in Charlotte County, the contractor must have:

- ❖ A valid contractor's license,
- ❖ General liability insurance and
- ❖ Workers' compensation insurance.

This is for EVERY type of contractor.

Just because an individual advertises in the phone book or newspaper, does not mean that they hold a contractor's license. Licensed contractors obtain building permits for their work. This work is then required to be inspected by Charlotte County State Certified Building Inspectors which insures the consumer that the contractor has met all local and state building codes. Go online to view licensed contractors or to inquire about obtaining a license.

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES

Charlotte County Code Section 1-10-19 requires that any person who engages in or manages any business, profession or occupation in the County, for which an occupational license tax is required, obtain that occupational license prior to the commencement of that business, profession or occupation.



If you already have an occupational license and are changing the location of your business, you are required to submit a new application transferring the license to the new location and include a copy of your current occupational license. You will also be required to provide an approved “Sewage Disposal Authorization for Businesses” form when registering a location change.

**Effective January 1, 2007, in accordance with Florida Statute 205, the Occupational License Tax will be renamed to Business Tax Receipt.*

BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Building Code Enforcement Division of Building Construction Services is part of the licensing division. This area’s functions are:

- ❖ Monitor contractors working in the County, make sure that they have the correct insurance and work in accordance with state and local laws surrounding workers compensation, liability insurance and correct licenses for the type of work they do.
- ❖ Make certain that contractors comply with all requirements of their license such as ensuring all permits receive a final inspection.
- ❖ Act as facilitators between contractors and homeowners to resolve conflicts.
- ❖ Unsafe building abatement, including inspecting structures that pose a threat to the surroundings and working with the owner to demolish or repair

the structure. In extreme cases, this may involve enacting the Standard Unsafe Building Abatement Code (SUBAC) which gives the Building Official the right to demolish a structure deemed unsafe. This is only used when all other solutions and alternatives have been exhausted.

Building codes are necessary to protect the life safety and welfare of the citizens of Charlotte County. Codes enforced in Charlotte County are identical to those enforced in the majority of the Florida Peninsula. The codes themselves are based upon the International Code Council Building Codes and are updated and produced at a State level.

Codes save lives – it is as simple as that. Codes were first strengthened following Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Various updates since 1992 incorporate new construction methods, new ideas and lessons learned. Homes that were built after the introduction of the 2002 Florida building code suffered less damage in Hurricane Charley in 2004 than those built before 2002.

Consider that the average house in Florida will be sold every five to six years. Modifications or work done on a house will more than likely be someone else’s problem a few years later. Codes exist to protect the current and future owners by ensuring the construction done is safe, secure and will last for many years to come.



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