



“CAN WE TALK? ”

“By Terry R. Brunette, Special Investigator for the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department.

BUILD A DECK “I CAN DO THAT”

Spring is in the air. My wife and I were sitting in our lawn chairs (in the dirt) enjoying the weather and a cold beverage last weekend. As I looked over at my wife I saw ‘the look’ on her face. She was admiring the neighbor’s nice new deck.’ The Look’ is my motivation to do something, so I headed down to the local lumber supplier. They provide plans and estimates for the materials to make me a hero. I’m ready to build my deck, now what’s the next step?

Answer: I’m happy you asked me now, rather than after you are finished and someone notifies us that you have built a deck without a permit. Your sore back and blisters will clear up much quicker than the difficulties that may arise by obtaining a permit after the deck is built. How do you get a permit? You will need to draw a site plan showing the size and the location of the deck on the property. If you check the closing documents you received when you purchased the home there should be an Improvement Location Certificate (ILC) included. Make a copy of it and draw in the deck and label it Proposed Deck, the scale of this drawing is 1”=20’. This part of the plan is reviewed by County or City Zoning to check to see that the new deck will not be encroaching into any setbacks, or create too much lot coverage for the property. Once zoning signs off you can apply for the permit and sit down with a Plan Check person to review the structural part of the plans. After the plans are released for construction you can obtain Building Permit. The Permit Technician will explain the inspection process and you are on your way. You can also access a variety of sample plans and requirements on our website. <http://www.pprbd.org/plancheck/PLCK%20Deck%20PKG06.pdf>. Good Luck!

FLIPPERS

Buyer Beware! The cable networks are full of shows about flipping houses, I’ve not seen any mention of building permits or inspections on any of these shows yet. Since the goal is to buy cheap, remodel cheap and sell high, doing the work to meet the building codes is an expense many of the flippers try to avoid. If you are in the market to buy a home and you see those two magic words ‘Totally Remodeled’ the next two magic words that come to mind should be ‘Building Permits’. Since these are usually not owner occupied, the property owners cannot pull a homeowner permit to do the work. Licensed contractors will have to pull the permits and perform the work. In my column last month I went over the requirements to be a licensed contractor, which include having the experience to perform the work and most importantly for the buyer, ‘Liability Insurance’. If something goes wrong with the work after you buy the house you have no recourse to make sure the problems corrected without Liability Insurance on the project.

The Real Estate professionals have really stepped up and access our website to check the permit history of the properties they list or sell. That has really helped to protect the public from illegal construction work that is being done. I spend a lot of my time trying to solve the ‘work without permit’ problems that come before me. One of my daughters and her husband asked me to look at a ‘totally remodeled’ house they fell in love with. The house had many structural, electric, plumbing, and heating alterations. I went on our website www.pprbd.org plugged in the address and there were no permits for the work. The listing agent apparently did not check this before listing the property. RBD was obligated to issue a Stop Work Order and we now there is a Certificate of Non-Compliance recorded against the property. You’re right; they did not make an offer on the property. To date

this house has not come across my desk to try to 'clear up permit issues', since a mortgage cannot close with the Certificate of Non-Compliance in place, the house must still be on the market. I'm not saying that all flippers are not playing by the rules. I wish these cable shows would focus as much on the life/safety aspect of the finished product as they do on the bottom line, especially when the cost of the permit probably is about equal to what a dishwasher costs.

Question: I recently purchased a hot tub and was told that permits were not required to hook it all up. Is this the case?

Answer: I went to our resident electric guru Terry Schneider, Chief Electrical Inspector. His answer is: "A permit is required for the electrical hookup for the hot tub. Actually, anytime new wiring is installed a permit is required. Hot tubs should especially be inspected; there are many safety issues when mixing electricity and water. The National Electrical Code has many special Ground Fault Interrupters that are required, and it is quite easy to mis-wire these components. There are also special clearance requirements between metal and electrical equipment that help protect the users of the hot tub. It is a serious issue and should not be taken lightly. If you have questions on whether an electric permit should be obtained. Please contact me at 327-2913". Thank You Mr. Schneider.

You can now access all of the past and current 'CAN WE TALK' columns on our website under the PPRBD link Next Month; **GLAZING CONTRACTORS, AND BEING YOUR OWN CONTRACTOR**

Terry R. Brunette is a Special Investigator for the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department.

Please take the time to visit our web site at www.pprbd.org

Submit your questions to: terryb@pprbd.org Or mail to: **Pikes Peak Regional Building Department
2880 International Circle Colorado Springs, CO 80910 Attn. Terry Brunette**