



2880 International Circle Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Building A Better Community Thru
Enforcement, Education, and Customer Service

www.pprbd.org

“CAN WE TALK? ”

“By Terry R. Brunette, Special to SpringsNewHomes.com
Greetings,

As expected the response has been great. I will select the questions that will affect the greatest number of people, so if your question is not covered now, it may be at a later date.

HERE WE GO!

Question: My contractor told me if I purchase my own building permit it would save me some money. As long as he is qualified to perform the work would it matter if I purchased my own permit?

Answer: That request would be a ‘Deal Breaker’ for me. Let me explain; you are allowed to purchase your own permit if you plan on doing the work yourself, and it is your primary residence. If you have an agreement with a contractor, that contractor must still be licensed to perform any work that requires a permit. To become a licensed contractor the licensee must pass the exam for the type of license applied for. The application must include 3 reference letters showing that the applicant has the experience to do the type of work the license covers. If the applicant passes the test (we administer testing for all but Master Plumber and Electric in house, plumbing and electric licenses are obtained thru the State) Building Licensee’s must appear before the Building Committee, Mechanical Licensee’s appear before the Mechanical Committee and be interviewed to receive final approval. Also the licensee must provide proof of liability insurance. If there are employees proof of Workman’s Compensation insurance is also required. Finally, we run a criminal background check on all applicants for a license in El Paso County. All of these requirements are in place for the protection of the public. Currently there are more than 3,000 active licenses in El Paso County. As you can see becoming a licensed contractor is more than just writing a check. When you pull your own permit you are the ‘Contractor’ with that right comes the liability that goes along with being a Contractor. Unless you are doing your own work I would make sure that your contractor is licensed and purchases the building permit. You can access a list of the licensed contractors thru our web site www.pprbd.org

Question: The Big Box Stores offer installation of many of the products they sell. What could be more convenient than that? What do you think about this option?

Answer: I agree, this is a nice service they provide. The Big Box Stores contract with licensed contractors to perform the work in the various jurisdictions they serve. Some of the services that require permits for example water heaters, furnaces, major electrical work, siding, roofing or exterior windows and doors if the new size is bigger than the existing openings, requiring that the structural framing be altered. There have been some cases where the contractor has not purchased the required permits, or had the work inspected. It would be wise that you check to make sure that if a permit is required the permit has been purchased and the work inspected. You can do this by calling our office 327-2880, or using our website at www.pprbd.org. and access permits by address.

Question: My house had hail damage last summer, I hired a contractor to reroof my house. Not long afterwards I

had a ‘Stop Work/Work Without Permit’ notice posted at my door from Regional Building. Now what do I do?

Answer: When a hailstorm hits an area, many times there are ‘Storm Chasers’ right behind it. They are Roofing Companies that chase these storms all over the country. There is a good chance that the roofer is not licensed to

work in El Paso County. Just because a Company presents itself professionally doesn’t mean it is licensed. There is an easy way for anyone to check to see if a contractor is licensed with Regional Building. You can call

327-2880 and ask for licensing or use our website at www.pprbd.org. It amazes me that we will spend more time researching the next HD TV we want, than we do researching the contractors that perform work on our biggest investment, our homes. Try to get in contact with the roofing company and demand that he get a permit and have your roof inspected. If the roofing company is not licensed or long gone, you as a homeowner can pull your own permit, but only if the house is your primary residence. When a Work Without Permit is issued it triggers a ‘triple fee’ meaning the permit will cost three times the normal cost for the permit. A Work Without Permit also starts the ‘Stop Watch’; if a permit is not acquired within 30 days a Certificate of Non-Compliance will be recorded against your property. Work Without Permits trigger a whole chain of events that could easily be avoided by a little research. We all want to trust the contractors we hire, but you need to “trust but verify”. Your roof may have been installed just fine, but that’s what the inspection will determine.

Question from Linda “My husband and I are going to build a house in the County and we were wondering if we need to have an engineered foundation?”

Answer: Yes, every new home or addition requires a soils report and engineered foundation. The soils vary so much throughout the County. In some cases the soils vary from lot to lot. That is why the code requires a site specific

Design for each house. Good luck with building your own home. I will cover the pitfalls to avoid, when being a homeowner builder in a future column.

NEXT MONTH: DECK BUILDING & FLIPPERS

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**