

Combination Permits for 1 & 2 Family Dwellings

Category: Residential Construction

Effective: June 1997 [Margaret M. Mahoney]

Responsible Bureau Section: Combination Inspections

PO Box 8120

Portland, OR 97207-8120

503-823-7388

In 1994, the Portland Office of Planning and Development Review (formerly Bureau of Buildings) established a "one-permit" system for construction on <u>one and two family dwellings</u> (not rowhouse or apartment buildings). The purpose of the change is to save the City and contractors time and money.

What is a combination permit?

A combination permit covers all work done on a construction project in a one or two family dwelling including structural, plumbing, electrical and mechanical work.

In some cases, sewer connections and on-site drainage for existing dwellings will still require a separate permit.

Who takes out the combination permit?

The general contractor or homeowner will apply for a single residential permit to do all of the work. If it is remodeling work, he/she has to have information on all of the work to be done in <u>each</u> specialty (such as number of plumbing fixtures, number of new circuits, etc). Permit fees for all specialties will be paid when the combination permit is issued.

If, once the permit is issued, the contractor, subcontractors, or homeowners identify additional work to be done, they can take out an additional "add on" permit. Fees for an "add on" will be the same as if the work was being added to the original permit.

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What do subcontractors have to do?

Electrical, mechanical, and plumbing subcontractors will be issued a packet of numbered, 3-copy inspection stickers, <u>at no charge</u>. These stickers can be used on any job within the calendar year indicated by the first digits of the sticker number. The contractor can either pick up these stickers in the Development Services Center or return the order form the bureau sends out each November.

At the beginning of each job, subcontractors will fill out and post an inspection sticker on the job site. The "supervisor" line on the sticker must be signed by the supervising electrician or by the plumbing or mechanical contractor. The sticker can be used only by the subcontractor to whom it was assigned. The bottom copy should stay on site until the job is finished.

What if there is no general contractor?

If there is no building contractor or homeowner in charge of the whole job, subcontractors will get separate permits just like they do now.

What if the homeowner wants to act as a subcontractor?

In cases where the homeowner wants to do part of the work, the general contractor will ask for a "homeowner label" when applying for the permit. The homeowner will use this special sticker for each specialty area he/she will be doing work in.

Did the inspection process change?

The inspection process isn't very different. The contractor or subcontractor doing the work calls for the inspection, <u>using the combination permit number.</u> The subcontractor can get this number from the general contractor or from the job card on site. For an inspection call the Inspection Request Line at 503-823-7000.

The inspector makes the inspection, leaves an inspection report on the site, and brings the inspector's copy of the sticker back to the office. If there is no inspection sticker on the site for mechanical, plumbing or electrical work under a combination permit, there will be no inspection. The sticker is the only way we know who did the work. We also verify that the contractor on the sticker matches the contractor who was issued the sticker.

Will this change the process for electrical "minor labels"?

No. Electrical contractors can still use minor labels for any work currently eligible under the electrical minor label program.

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What about low-voltage electrical work (alarms, vacuum systems, etc.)?

If the job will include any low-voltage electrical work, the general contractor should include the work in the combination permit. Subcontractors doing low voltage work should sign the low-voltage log sheet on site. Since the low-voltage permit fee only covers one inspection, the contractor or subcontractor shouldn't call for the inspection until <u>all</u> low-voltage work is ready for inspection.

If the owner decides to add low-voltage electrical systems <u>after</u> the combination permit has been taken out, then each subcontractor doing low-voltage work will take out an "add on" permit and post it at the site.

What if I have questions about the process?

Call the Combination Inspections office at 503-823-7388. TDD #(503) 823-6868