



# HOMEOWNERS GUIDE TO THE BUILDING PROCESS

Building & Fire Safety Division - Yakima County Public Services

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This guide is for informational purposes only and is subject to change without notice.

**Yakima County Public Services Department**  
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**INTRODUCTION:**

This handout has been prepared to provide general information to homeowners in planning residential type projects on their own property. Construction projects are subject to building codes and zoning ordinances. They work in conjunction with one another to protect the public. Many projects not only need a "building permit", but not limited to, may also require a review or permit by the Planning Division, Yakima Health District or Sewer District and similar agencies.

**ASSISTANCE:**

We can assist you with zoning questions, building setbacks, building code questions, snow loads and seismic categories for your parcel, etc. For various information regarding your particular parcel, you will need your TAX PARCEL NUMBER and either come to our office, or call **(509) 574-2300**. (You can find your tax parcel number on your tax statement, or on your deed.)

**PURPOSE:**

Regulations of building codes provides minimum standards to safeguard life and limb, health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling design, construction and quality of materials of structures within this jurisdiction.

- The International Codes are generally available at a public library for those who wish to research the more complex requirements and alternatives.

Zoning ordinances promote public health, safety, and general welfare by encouraging the most appropriate use of the land, protecting social and economic stability, and assuring orderly development.

- Zoning ordinances are available on our website (shown below), or you may purchase a copy from our office.

<http://www.codepublishing.com/WA/yakimacounty/>

A building permit may be issued when ALL relevant departments and reviews have been approved. The timeframe for review processing and approvals will vary as well as expiration of any approvals and permits.

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS:** Plan your project carefully. Once your building permit is issued, ALL PERMITS ISSUED UNDER THIS CODE SHALL EXPIRE 3 YEARS AFTER THE DATE THAT THE PERMIT WAS ISSUED if you have not obtained an APPROVED FINAL INSPECTION.

The International Codes require that **prior to construction, a permit shall be obtained.**

Should you have questions regarding what DOES or DOES NOT require a permit, please contact our office prior to construction. This pertains not just to the construction, relocation, alteration of structures etc., but excavation or grading as well.

**BUILDING PERMIT FEES:** (Fees are subject to change without notice)

(Yakima County Fee schedule is available in our office and also on our website at <http://www.yakimacounty.us/buildingfiresafety/BuildingFees.html>.)

- Building permit fees are typically based on the *square footage, type of construction, and occupancy* (size, how it is built and what the building is used for).
- Plan check fee is 65% of the established building permit fee. (Due at the time your application is submitted)
- Plumbing permit fees are based on the number (how many) and type of fixtures installed.
- Mechanical permit fees are based on the type and size of equipment installed (based per piece of equipment)
- Manufactured home fees are based on the size of the home. (For example: single wide, double wide, triple wide).
- LPG (Propane Tanks) fees are based on the size of the tank. A mechanical permit would be required for new equipment, or for existing equipment if it did not have a valid permit, or inspections had not been approved.
- Grading permit fees are based on the total cubic yards of material excavated, (the combined **cut and fill**).
- Flood Hazard Determination is required when the parcel is within a FEMA designated floodplain or floodway.

**Work EXEMPT from a permit:** (adopted by Ordinance 5-2013, October 8, 2013)

1. **Residential Accessory Structure** (To be exempt, the proposed structure shall meet **ALL** of the following criteria)

- Shall be **on the same lot** with a Group R-3 Occupancy (**existing house**),
- **Non-habitable**, (shall not be used, or intended to be used, for living, sleeping, or cooking).
- Shall be used as a **tool and storage shed, playhouse, pump house, or woodshed**. (Lawn mowers, garden tillers, and other small motorized lawn and garden care equipment may be stored).
- The **building area or horizontal projected roof area** does not exceed 200 square feet, **AND the COMBINED AREA of exempt residential accessory structures on any one lot SHALL NOT exceed 200 square feet.** *Additional residential accessory structures may be built by obtaining permits for them,*
- **Maximum One-story high**, (highest point of the roof does not exceed 12 feet (3660 mm) above lowest adjacent grade),
- Shall be **detached** - 6 feet from all other structures,
- Shall **NOT be heated, nor equipped** with any **plumbing system, or mechanical system,**
- Shall **NOT have a basement or crawl space** that provides **greater than 18 inches clearance** below floor joists to the lowest part of the basement or crawlspace,
- Shall **NOT be located in a flood plain or floodway** mapped by FEMA.
- Shall **NOT be located in an area designated as a "critical area" or "shoreline area"** by state or local regulation,
- The structure **SHALL NOT** be used as (but not limited to) a
  - **Carpport,**
  - **Garage,**
  - **Storage of automobiles,**
  - **Motor homes, recreational vehicles or similar motorized vehicles.**
  - **Tractor, farm equipment, agricultural products,**
  - **Animal shelters,**
- **NOT used, OR intended to be used, as a place of business,**
- The structure is **NOT used** for storage of **hazardous materials in excess of the amounts listed in the Fire Code.** (Maximum allowable quantity per control area of hazardous materials posing a physical hazard, and maximum allowable quantity per control area of hazardous materials posing a health hazard).

**Structures that do not meet the above parameters and conditions are not exempt from the permitting requirements of R105 and it is required that permits must be obtained prior to commencing construction.**

**Also EXEMPT from a building permit are:**

2. **Fences not over 7 feet high.**
3. **Retaining walls** which are **not over 4 feet in height** measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
4. **Water tanks** supported directly upon grade if the capacity does **not exceed 5,000** gallons and the ratio of **height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.**
5. **Sidewalks, platforms, decks without roof covers,** ramps and driveways **not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below.**
6. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and similar **finish work.**
7. **Prefabricated swimming pools** that are **less than 24 inches deep.**
8. **Swings and other playground equipment** accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
9. **Window awnings** supported by an exterior wall which **do not project more than 54 inches** from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
10. **Decks not exceeding 200 square feet** in area, that are **not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve the exit door required by Section R311.4.**
11. **Replace or repair of siding** that is not required to be fire resistive, **except** for homes and multi-family housing **located in wildfire hazard areas** requiring a fire resistive roof.
12. **Retrofitted insulation** where no structural alterations are required.
13. **Door and window** replacement where **no structural member is changed and the replacement does not involve a bedroom window (safety glazing may be required in windows that had not previously been tempered).**
14. **Reroofing** where replacement or repair of the roofing material conforms to the requirements of section **R907,** Reroofing, of this code, the roof is not required to be fire resistive, and the residence or multi-family structure is not located in a wildfire hazard zone requiring a fire resistive roof.

**ELECTRICAL:** (Contact the WA Department of Labor and Industries for their permit requirements)

Repairs and maintenance: A permit shall not be required (by Yakima County) for minor repair work, including the replacement lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

*Exempt permits continued on next page.....*

**GAS:**

1. Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.

2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
3. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

**MECHANICAL:**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation appliances.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746W) or less.
8. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

**PLUMBING:**

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe; provided, however that if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
2. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the re-placement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

**R105.2.1 Emergency repairs.**

Where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted within the next working business day to the building official.

**PROJECT PREPARATION:** Additional informational handouts are available at our office for various types of projects.

Proper preparation of your application, site plan and plans is a major key to obtain a permit without unnecessary delays. Plan carefully, make certain that your plans clearly indicate WHAT you are going to do, WHERE you are going to do it, and HOW you propose to do it.

Knowing your snow load, wind, and seismic category will help you when planning and designing your structure. (IRC301.2.3) ground snow loads greater than 70 pounds per square foot shall be designed in accordance with accepted engineering practice.

**APPLICATION SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTS**

- Provide a completed “General Application for Construction”
  - Assessor Parcel Number, or short plat and lot number, subdivision name and lot number.
- Detailed site plan (handout example: Yakima County Building & Fire site plan requirements)
- Contractor information regarding state license and expiration date. (this can be obtained thru Washington State Department of Labor and Industries)
- (2) Two complete sets of plans. Plans must be drawn on a minimum size of 8 ½” x 11” paper, using an indelible substance (not pencil). (an example is located in the back of this guide)
  - ✓ Drawings as necessary to illustrate proposed construction: (Example shown at the back of this handout)
  - ✓ Floor plan (Each room shall be labeled with the proposed use)
  - ✓ Foundation plan (Show brace wall panels or alternate brace wall panel, size & location).
  - ✓ Framing plan (All floors including basement and any attic storage, bonus truss, etc.)
  - ✓ Floor framing plan (Engineered floor systems require a layout & design reports for the individual floor joists)
  - ✓ Roof framing plan (If using manufactured trusses, the truss layout and individual truss sheets, that are stamped by the engineer)
  - ✓ Exterior elevations (All side views of the structure)
  - ✓ Building / cross wall sections. (Conventional stud wall height is 10 feet maximum, over 10’ wall height may require engineering.)
  - ✓ Details to illustrate special construction conditions (refer to attached drawing examples at back of this guide)

**Flood Hazard Determination will be required if your parcel is located within a FEMA mapped floodplain or floodway area.**

**Flood Hazard Development Permit is required if the structure will be located within the 100 year floodplain, a Flood Development review will be completed by the Plans Examiner during review of your plans.**

**PLAN REVIEW:**

Your plans will be reviewed by the plans examiner, typically on a first-come-first served basis. Deficient plans, incomplete plans, or questions regarding your plans will result in plan review comments. You will be notified of the deficiencies or questions. You will then need to address the comments and resubmit for re-review. If questions still arise after the initial re-review, additional plan review fees may incur. The plans will be approved when they are code compliant.

**CHANGES TO PLANS:**

Changes in plans arising after plans have been checked and approved, require approval by the Permit Services Office. This may be done over the counter or may require re-submission of revised plans, depending on the complexity of the changes. The prior approved plans, (both the office copy and customer copy) must show any changes or revisions. Additional fees will be assessed for changes that result in increases in square footage or additional plan review.

**EXPIRATION OF PLAN REVIEWS:**

Plan reviews expire by limitation in 180 days unless an extension is requested and granted by the Building Official. Extension requests must be in writing stating the reason for the request and timeframe. A maximum 180 days may be requested. Please allow ample time for processing your application and plans, but do not submit them prematurely.

**PERMIT ISSUANCE:**

The balance of the permit fee is due at the time of permit issuance. When your building permit is issued you will receive a copy of your approved plans, receipt, and permit (to be posted on the premises during construction). The plans and permit must be available for the inspector when he performs an inspection. Once issued, you are ready to proceed with construction.

**ALL PERMITS ISSUED UNDER THIS CODE SHALL EXPIRE 3 YEARS AFTER THE DATE THAT THE PERMIT WAS ISSUED if the work has not received an APPROVED FINAL INSPECTION. In the instance where a permit expires 3 years after the issuance date due to not having an approved final inspection, an application for a new permit for the work shall be submitted, reviewed for compliance with applicable regulations then in effect, and when approved for issuance and all required fees have been paid, a new permit for the work will be issued.**

**PERMIT EXPIRATION:**

For a building permit to remain valid, building code provisions require that work be continued and inspections conducted at a maximum 180 day period. During any 180 day period, if a reasonable amount of work is not accomplished and no legitimate inspection has been requested, your permit will automatically expire. If circumstances beyond your control prevent you from working, an extension may be granted by the Building Official. Before expiration takes place, an extension may be requested which must be submitted in writing. You must list the reason(s) requesting the extension, and the timeframe when you will be ready for the next inspection (not to exceed 180 days).

1. If you allow your permit to expire, additional fees are necessary to reinstate your permit.
2. If your permit had expired 1 year or more, a new permit application must be submitted and processed as a new project. Full permit fees shall be required.

## THE INSPECTION PROCESS:

### Inspection Request Line

**(509) 574-2370**



To request your inspection, the following information must be provided:

- ✓ **Permit number**
- ✓ **Owners or contractors name and phone number of contact person**
- ✓ **Job site address**
- ✓ **Type of structure / project**
- ✓ **Stage of work to be inspected**
- ✓ **Day inspection is requested for**

Inspections may be requested in person or by telephone by calling (509) 574-2370 during regular office hours or after hours and weekends/holidays. Inspection requests must be received a minimum of 24 hours (business hours) prior to the requested inspection date. Because each inspector arranges his/her own schedule to make the best use of field time, no specific appointment times can be granted. Inspections are performed Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Field inspectors may be reached at (509) 574-2300 between the hours of 8:00 am to 8:30 am or from 3:30 pm to 4:00 pm.

At time of inspection, the approved plans must be available for the inspector to make comparisons with the work performed and the approved plans. Your copy of the permit must be accessible for the inspector to note APPROVED or NOT APPROVED for each required inspection.

NOT APPROVED: "Correction Notice" will be completed by your inspector outlining the items to be completed before approval. When corrections have been accomplished, you will need to schedule a re-inspection to verify compliance. Time delays and re-inspections can be avoided if you make sure that work is complete before you call for an inspection. Any necessary tests should be done ahead of time to assure acceptance and compliance. Additional fees for a re-inspection may be assessed for scheduling an inspection when the work is "not ready".

## INSPECTIONS:

To protect the health, safety and welfare of occupants, the Building & Fire Division is committed to provide a high level of service to the community by inspecting for code compliance. All such construction or work shall remain accessible and exposed for inspection purposes until approved by the building official. Building regulations require that inspections are completed and approved before concealment or further construction.

Typical inspection stages are:

- **FORMS and FOOTING:** **BEFORE** pouring concrete, inspection is required to verify the zoning setbacks and inspect the forms. Forms, reinforcing steel, and hold-down anchors must be in place.
- **SLAB:** (see above) Forms must be in place.
- **LOWEST FLOOR IF WITHIN THE FLOOD PLAIN**
- **ROOF SHEATHING and SHEAR PANEL:** When roof sheathing is installed. All shear panels, hold-downs and shear transfer is in place and properly attached.
- **FRAMING:** After all framing, fire blocking and bracing are in place; chimneys and vents are completed; roofing material is loaded on the roof; and rough electrical wiring; plumbing piping; and heating ducts have been installed and inspected. (Please contact the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries for your electrical inspection).
- **INSULATION:** Insulation is installed, but prior to covering wall or ceiling.
- **GAS TEST:** After cabinets are installed, but prior to final inspection. (LP gas will require a separate LP tank permit, required prior to final inspection).
- **FINAL:** After finish grading and building is ready for occupancy. All plumbing and electrical fixtures and appliances must be in place.

## FINAL APPROVAL:

After the building inspector makes his inspections and all requirements have been satisfied, your project will be approved. If new electric or gas service has been installed as a part of your project and approved by the inspector, he will see that the utility company is notified. (You must also contact them and arrange for installation of meters).

Other inspection may be required in addition to those listed above. Check with your building inspector if you are unsure of when inspections are necessary for your project

**Yakima County Planning Division** can assist you regarding Zoning Regulations, Shoreline, and Critical Area.

Although some projects may not require a building permit, Yakima County Planning Division approval may still be necessary. Typical regulations that may affect your project (but not limited to):

- Permitted structures or uses in each zoning district;
- Required minimum setbacks from roads, easements, property lines;
- Especially Sensitive Land Use (Residence, daycare, schools, etc.) require additional setbacks from Agricultural, Forest Watershed, and Mineral Resource sites;
- Height limitations of structures;
- Lot coverage, the total impervious surface for structures, concrete slabs, asphalt, etc. (Brick pavers, gravel, wooden decks are pervious and would not be included in the calculation);
- Shoreline / Critical Area setbacks or buffer zones may require land use exemption or permit;
- Greenway & airport overlay districts;
- Variances (i.e.: Administrative Adjustment to the zoning setback regulations, buffer etc.);
- Conditional Use Permits, i.e.: Accessory apartment, Temporary permit for infirmed relative / caretaker residence, Home Occupations, Etc.;

**NOTE**

Failure to obtain permits constitutes a violation of County Ordinances. Building without a permit may result in additional penalties and a stop work order. If improvements do not meet recognized building and safety standards or zoning requirements, removal may be ordered.

Other agencies or jurisdictions that may require a permit or approval for your project:

**Electrical permits - Department of Labor and Industries.**

**Septic systems - Yakima Health District.**

**Sewer systems - Various districts, ie: City of Yakima, Terrace Heights, Buena, etc.**

**Well - Washington State Department of Ecology or Yakima Health District.**

**Other potable water hookup - Various districts as Nob Hill Water, City of Yakima, Terrace Heights, etc.**

**Clean Air Authority - <http://www.yakimacleanair.org/index.html>**

**HELPFUL HINTS FROM**

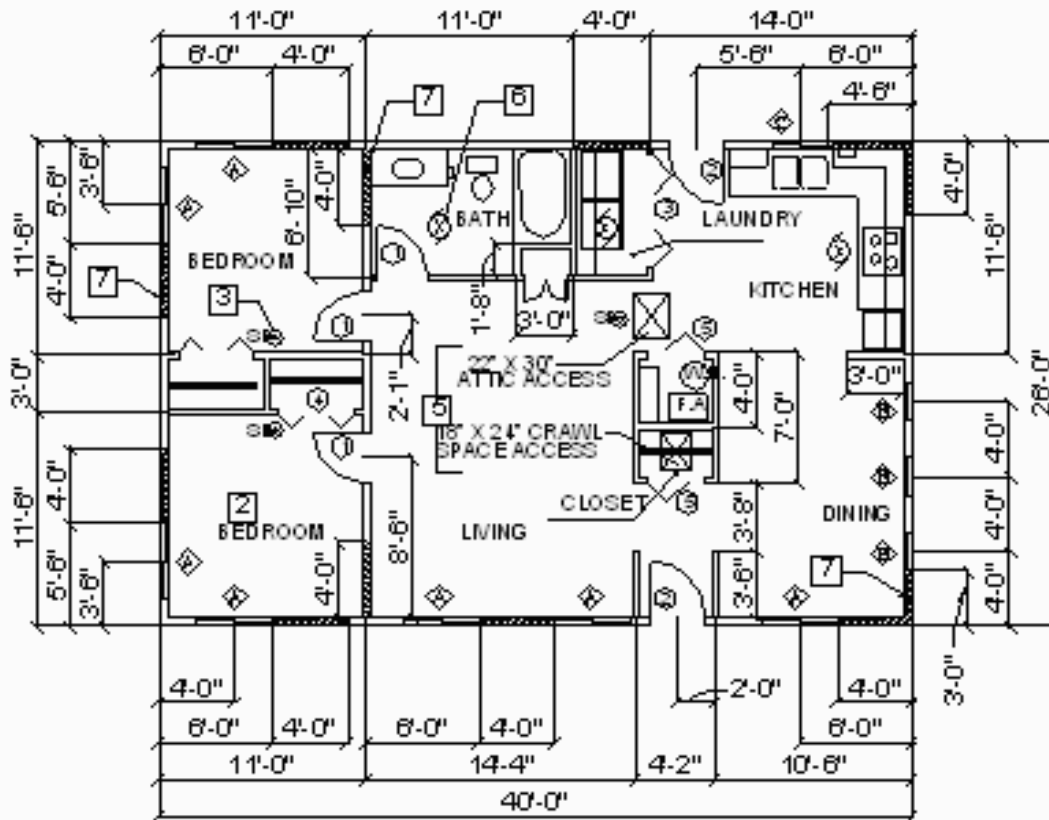
**Washington State Department of Labor and Industries**

- Plan your project carefully.
- When hiring a licensed contractor, verify that the license is current by checking with the Washington State Contractor’s License Information line at 1-800-647-0982.
- Obtain at least 3 bids; review the work to be done; and have a written contract drawn up.
- Verify insurance coverage; general liability, and workers compensation.
- Avoid letting your payments get ahead of the contractor’s completed work.
- Make certain that inspections are obtained throughout construction.
- Keep a job file. Retain final permits and approved drawings for future reference.
- Make sure all work to be done is agreed upon and is written into your contract.
- Obtain written guarantees and warranties of the workmanship and materials.
- Obtain final inspection and final approval by the Permit Services Division as well as any other jurisdiction. I.e.: Department of Labor & Industries for electrical, Yakima Health District.
- Make final payment when all work is done per your written agreement.

**PLAN EXAMPLE ONLY FOR DETAILS REQUIRED**

Copy not to scale or to the current building code

**FLOOR PLAN CHECKLIST**



- 1 Completely dimension plan, locate all walls and openings.
- 2 Label rooms, specify use of all rooms.
- 3 Provide smoke detectors per IRC codes.
- 4 Specify the size of all doors and windows. Egress windows are required in bedrooms.
- 5 Provide crawl space and attic access, size & location.
- 6 Provide mechanical ventilation as required by Washington State Energy Code.  
A – 50 SFM minimum for bath & laundry room.  
B – 100 CFM minimum for kitchens.
- 7 Braced Wall Panels  
A – Exterior panels 4'-0" or greater \* 1/2" plywood sheathing.  
B – Exterior panels 2'-8" to 4'-0"; \* 1/2" plywood sheathing nailed with 8D common or galvanized box nails and blocked at all edges. (2) anchor bolts at panel quarter points. Tie downs at panel end studs 1 uplift capacity of not less than 1800 lbs., foundation to have (1) #4 continuous rebar top and bottom  
C - Interior braced wall panels. \* 1/2" GWB nailed at 7" O.C. per table 25-1, applied to both sides of studs.

**DOORS & WINDOWS**

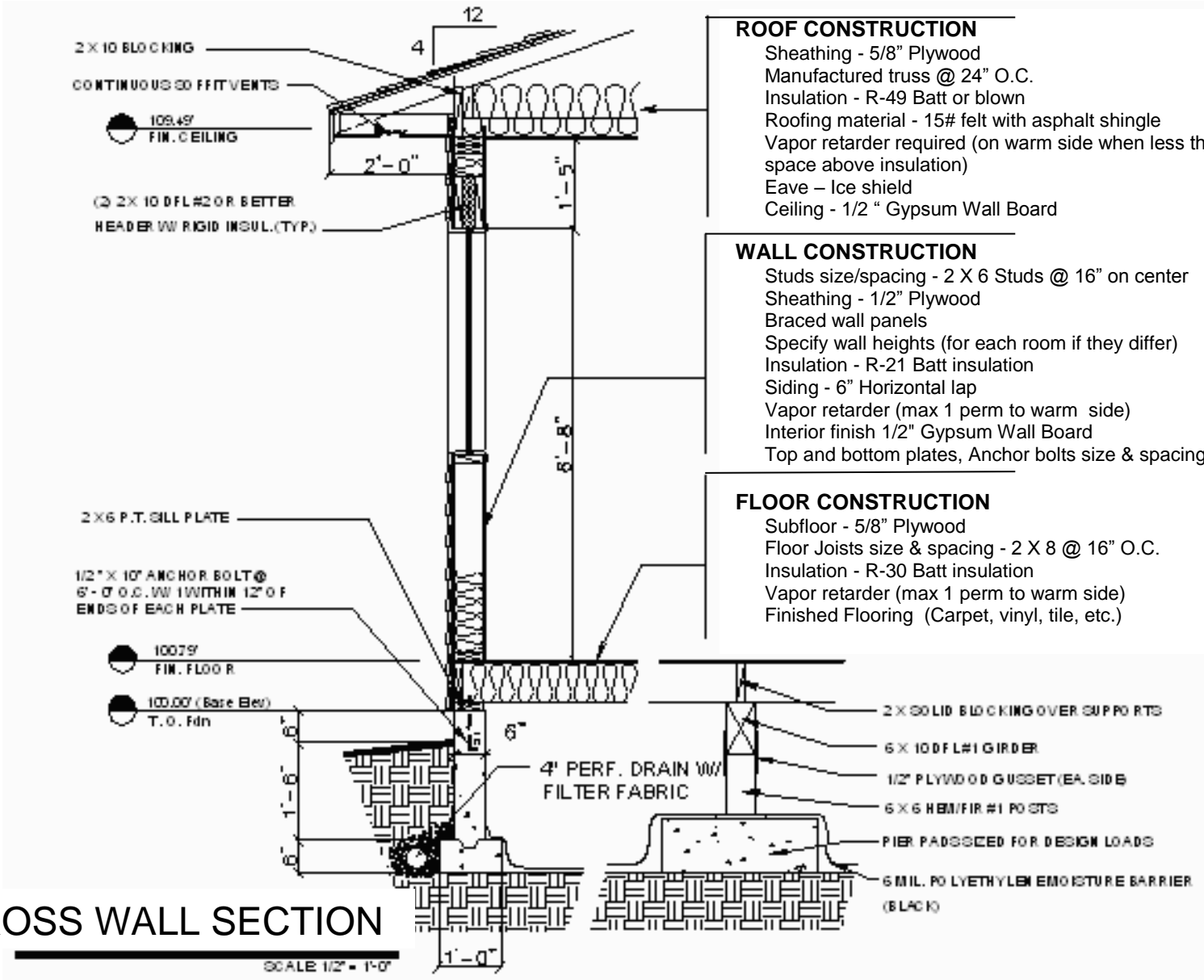
- ① 2'-8" x 6'-8" WOOD DOOR (HOLLOW CORE)
- ② 3'-0" x 6'-8" WOOD DOOR (SOLID CORE)
- ③ 6'-0" x 6'-8" DOUBLE BI-FOLD
- ④ 4'-0" x 6'-8" DOUBLE BI-FOLD
- ⑤ 3'-0" x 6'-8" BI-FOLD
- ⑥ 4'-0" x 3'-6" SLIDER
- ⑦ 2'-0" x 3'-6" FIXED
- ⑧ 3'-0" x 3'-6" SLIDER

**KEY**

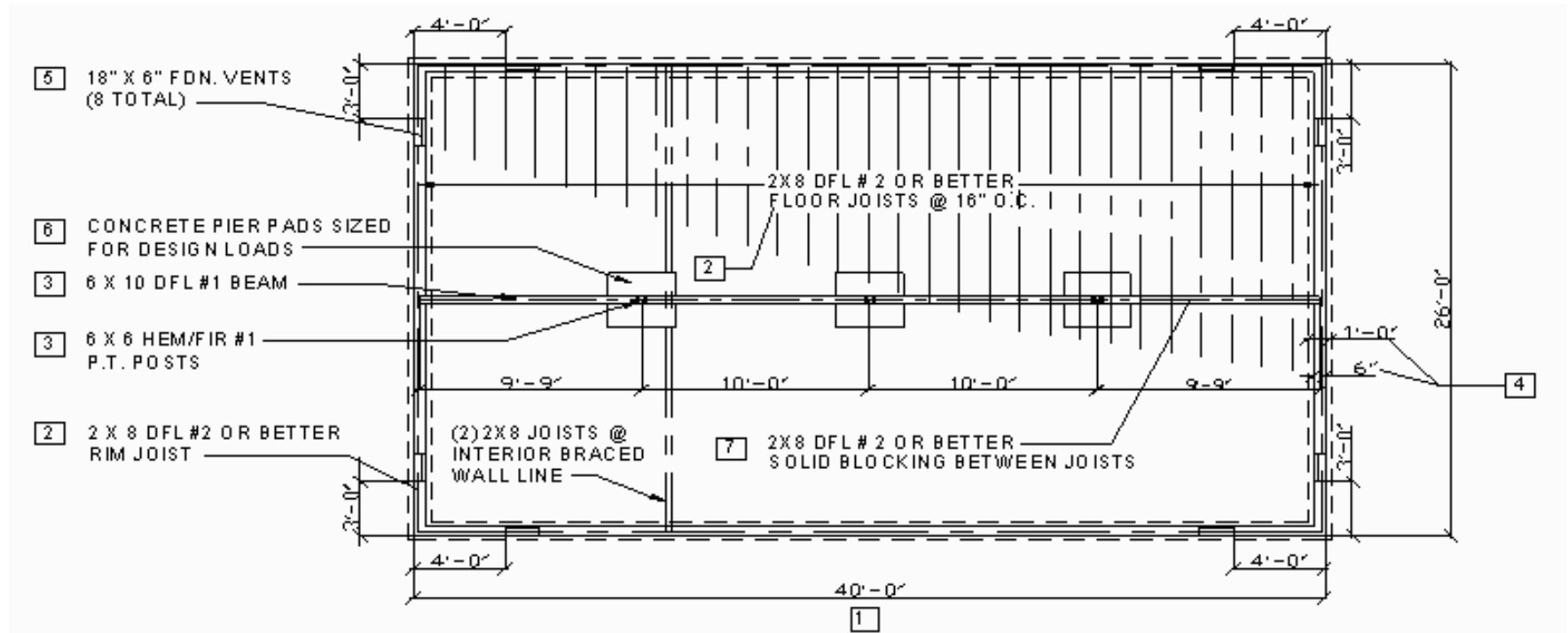
- ▨ BRACED WALL PANELS
- 2x6 WALLS @ 16" O.C. (EXT.)
- 2x4 STUDS @ 16" O.C. (INT.)

**FLOOR PLAN**

SCALE : 1/8" = 1'-0"



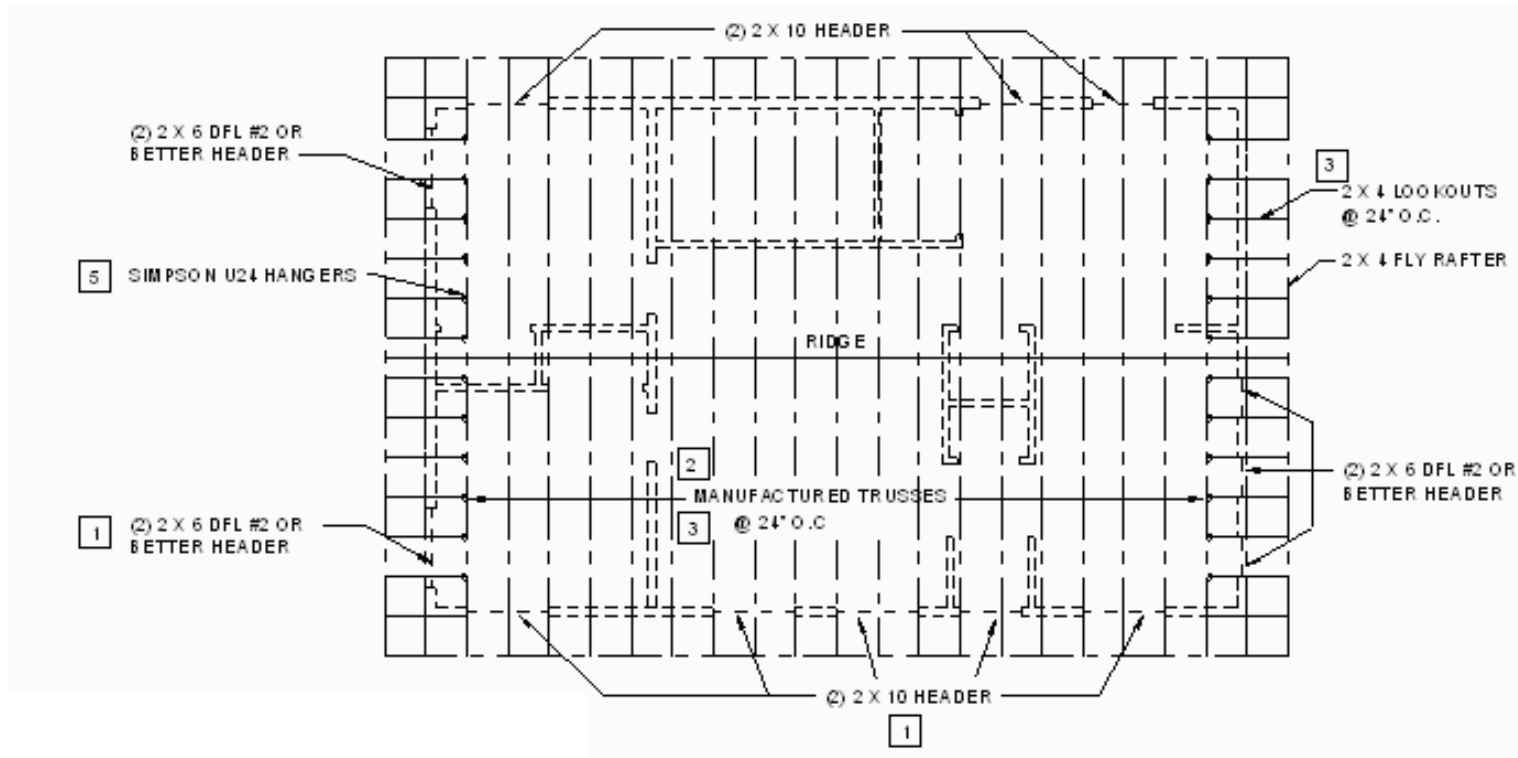




1. Fully dimension plan.
2. Specify size, grade, species and spacing of all floor framing members. If applicable, specify brand of engineered floor system and provide layout & design specifications.
3. Specify size, grade, species and spacing of all beams and columns.
4. Footing and foundation wall, sizes, height, width, depth.
5. Foundation / under floor ventilation is required. Specify size and location of crawl space vents.
6. Specify size and spacing of footing pads and piers.
7. Lateral bracing and blocking as required by the current building code.
8. Crawl space size & location

## FOUNDATION / FLOOR FRAMING

SCALE : 1/8" – 1' 0"



- 1 Specify size, grade and species of headers above all openings.
- 2 If trusses are used, specify spacing and provide the truss layout and truss specifications. Truss sheets must be stamped by the engineer.
- 3 For stick framed roof, specify size, grade and species of all lumber. Provide layout showing all ridges, valleys, and hips.
- 4 If beams are used to carry roof loads, specify size, grade, species and dimension of span.
- 5 If using metal connections for truss or beam hold downs or hangers, please specify the manufacture and product number.

## ROOF FRAMING PLAN

SCALE : 1/8" – 1'-0"

1. Finished floor and ceiling heights.
2. Overall height of building
3. Finished Grade
4. Roof Pitch
5. Roofing & siding materials
6. Roof Ventilation:
  - Continuous ridge and soffit vents
  - Roof jacks to provide 1 s.f.. (NET ventilation area)
  - Per 150 s.f. of attic area if vents located 3'-0" or more above eave or cornice vents with balance of required ventilation provided by eave or cornice vents.
7. Chimney clearance (if applicable)
8. Show all windows and doors.
9. Footing depth below finished grade.

