

YOUR GUIDE  
TO  
HOME IMPROVEMENT  
IN  
NORTHFIELD

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Adding or replacing a fence? Building a deck? Installing a swimming pool or tennis court? Planning a home improvement project? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, this guide is for you.

This guide explains some of the Village regulations regarding home improvements. Some of the most frequently asked questions are answered in this guide and hopefully yours will be among them. While this is not a comprehensive guide, we hope it is helpful.

Unfortunately, space does not allow the listing of all the regulations for each unique property or project. Therefore, it is very important to contact the Building Department before starting a project. Make sure you have all the information available before beginning your building project.

Obtaining a permit for improvements to your home or business ensures: 1) Plans have been reviewed for code compliance; 2) Contractors are licensed and bonded as required; 3) Work is inspected by knowledgeable code enforcement inspectors; and 4) The completed project is in accordance with codes.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call or stop by the Building Department located at the Village Hall, 361 Happ Road. The Building Department is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our qualified staff is on hand to help you make your project a success.

*QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AT (847) 784-3551  
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## II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Building permits are required for most types of construction projects. If required, building permits must be obtained prior to beginning any construction. See Sections VI, VII and VIII for more information on building permits and fees.

All projects are regulated by Village codes and ordinances to maintain uniformity and safety. See Section III regarding the Village codes that apply to your project.

For your protection, plumbing contractors performing work under an approved permit must be bonded and supply a Certificate of Insurance (naming the Village as additional insured) to work in the Village. See Section IV for more information on Plumbing Contractors.

Inspections are required as the work progresses. A final inspection is required upon completion of a project. Section IX provides additional information regarding inspections.

Please see Section X on Page 12 for information regarding storm water detention requirements.

For answers to the most commonly asked questions, see Section XII on pages 14 and 15 of this booklet.

*QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AT (847) 784-3551  
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### III. VILLAGE CODES

The Village adopts Codes and Ordinances to establish minimum standards for the safety and benefit of all Village residents. The Village has adopted the following Codes and Ordinances relating to home improvement projects:

2006 International Residential Code for One and Two Family Dwellings *(adopted 2/19/08)*

2006 International Building Code (commercial and non-residential construction) *(adopted 2/19/08)*

2006 International Mechanical Code *(adopted 2/19/08)*

2009 International Fire Code *(adopted 5/20/14)*

2006 International Energy Conservation Code *(adopted 2/19/08)*

2008 NFPA 70 National Electric Code *(adopted 2/19/08)*

2004 State of Illinois Plumbing Code

Northfield Zoning Ordinance

All of the above Codes and Ordinances are available for review at the Village Hall or the Codes can be purchased through the BOCA (Building Officials and Code Administrators International) and publishers. Most of the Codes listed above also have Village amendments. If you have specific inquiries regarding the above Codes or local Village amendments, the Building Department staff will be happy to help.

QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AT (847) 784-3551  
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### IV. CONTRACTORS

Contractors performing work under an approved permit do not need to be registered and bonded with the Village, with the exception of Plumbing Contractors. A plumbing permit will not be issued until the Village receives a \$10,000 bond, Certificate of Insurance (naming the Village as additional insured), copy of their State of Illinois Registration License and a copy of their current plumbers license. This requirement is for the protection of all homeowners in the Village. Bonding helps ensure work will be performed in compliance with all Village Codes and Ordinances.

Although, the homeowner may do some of the construction work, all plumbing work must be performed by a licensed plumbing contractor. Electrical work may be performed by the homeowner with the requirement that they sign a statement indicating if the work completed is not adequate, they will agree to employ a registered electrical contractor to meet Village code requirements.

### V. BUILDING CONSTRUCTION HOURS

(Effective 8/17/04)

Monday thru Friday	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.
National Holidays	12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

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## VI. BUILDING PERMITS

Permits are required for many remodeling projects, repairs, replacements, new structures and additions. Before starting any home improvement project, please contact the Building Department for permit requirements. Some typical construction projects requiring permits are listed below. If your project is not listed, be sure to contact Village staff to inquire about regulations which may apply to your project.

- Additions
- Balconies
- Central air conditioners, new or replaced
- Concrete stoops or slabs
- Decks or porches
- Decorative ponds
- Driveways, replacement or expansion
- Electrical work
- Fences, new or replaced
- Fireplaces
- Furnaces, new or Replaced
- Garages, attached or detached
- Gas-light conversions
- Gazebos or greenhouses
- Generators
- Grading/Landscaping
- Patios
- Playground equipment
- Plumbing work
- Remodeling – interior, exterior or basement
- Retaining walls
- Roof decking replacement (as in tear-offs)
- Satellite dishes, antennas
- Sewer repair, replacement or clean-out
- Sheds, new or replaced
- Sidewalks or stairs
- Swimming pools, in or above ground
- Tennis courts
- Underground sprinkler system
- Wall partitions
- Water heaters or softeners, new or replaced
- Whirlpools/spas/hot tubs
- Windows or doors when added, increased or decreased in size

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## VI. BUILDING PERMITS (cont'd)

The Building Department has many helpful handouts specifying general regulations for many of the previously listed projects. Handouts are available for decks, swimming pools, fences, tennis courts and others. Please contact Village staff to see if a handout is available for your project.

Permit fees, plan review fees and refundable bonds may be associated with your project. Village staff will inform you of any required fees when you apply for your permit. You may also refer to Section VII for our building permit submission list and Section VIII for building permit fees. Please note the fees listed are subject to change at any time.

Four (4) sets of plans and specifications are required for all building projects. An original current plat of survey drawn to scale showing existing conditions and proposed improvements is required for all permit applications. This includes interior remodeling projects as well.

The plans for all projects must be reviewed for conformance to applicable Village codes before a permit can be issued. This type of review is called a Plan Review. Please contact the Building Department staff to determine what is necessary to apply for your permit. For building projects involving underground construction, a JULIE dig number will be required (see page 14 for information regarding JULIE).

Please remember to obtain a building permit before starting any work. Work started without a permit will be stopped by Village staff and the homeowner and/or contractor may be assessed a fine.

*QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AT (847) 784-3551  
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## VII. BUILDING PERMIT SUBMISSION LIST

All building permits must be completed and submitted before plan review. Applications will not be accepted nor building permits issued if any of the items listed below are missing or incomplete:

1. \$100.00 Plan Review Fee and either \$400.00 escrow for projects less than \$50,000.00 or \$1,000.00 escrow for project more than \$50,000.00 - Check (Payable to Village of Northfield) or Visa, Master Card or Discover Credit Card
2. Four (4) sets of Construction Plans with Elevations.
3. One (1) copy of the Plat of Survey (Drawn to scale and show all existing conditions).
4. One (1) copy of the Plot Plan (Proposed Site Plan).
5. Original Building Permit Application Completely Filled Out. *(Faxed/photo copies are not accepted)*
6. Original Electrical Permit Application Completely Filled Out. *(Faxed/photo copies are not accepted)*
7. Original HVAC Permit Application Completely Filled Out. *(Faxed/photo copies are not accepted)*
8. Original Plumbing Permit Application Completely Filled Out. *(Faxed/photo copies are not accepted)*
9. Original Roofing Permit Application Completely Filled Out. *(Faxed/photo copies are not accepted)*
10. Tree Preservation/Protection Application Filled Out.
11. Three (3) copies of Site Development Permit and Drawings – Including final grade elevations per Village Storm Water Management Ordinance.

The above applications are available in the Building Department at Village Hall.

QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING AT (847) 784-3551  
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## VIII. BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE

Each applicant for a building permit to build or remodel any residential, commercial or industrial building or structure will be required to pay to the Village the fees listed below. Fees paid for permits or applications are not refundable and are subject to change at any time.

First \$1,000.00 of the contract cost or estimated cost of the project, minimum . . . . . \$60.00

Each additional \$1,000.00 of contract or estimated contract cost . . . . . \$14.00

Re-inspection fee . . . . . \$75.00

Plan review fees:

(1) 1 hour of review, minimum charge . . . . . \$100.00

(2) Each hour over 2 hours, additional per hour . . . \$100.00

(3) Escrow to cover re-inspection costs and unanticipated problems. Upon completion of the building permit, excess escrow funds will be returned to the applicant . . . . . \$400.00 for projects less than \$50,000.00 or \$1,000.00 for projects more than \$50,000.00

When a building permit is issued, the applicant is required to post a cash bond. The bond will be refunded without interest after final inspection and approval by the Village.

### COMPLETION BOND:

- Project cost less than \$10,000 = **\$1,000.00**
- Project cost greater than \$10,000 less than \$25,000 = **\$2,500.00**
- Project cost greater than \$25,000 less than \$100,000 = **\$5,000.00**
- Project cost greater than \$100,000 = **\$10,000.00**

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## IX. INSPECTIONS

As work progresses, it must be inspected by Village staff to ensure that it complies with the approved permit plans and all code regulations.

To schedule an inspection, please call the Building Department at least 24 hours before the time you want your inspection. Be sure to give the address of the property and the permit number when you schedule an inspection. Someone must be home and depending upon the type of inspection the contractor may be required to be present during the inspection. Prior to calling for an inspection, please make sure the work for which you are requesting an inspection has been completed. A \$75.00 re-inspection fee may be charged for extra inspections due to inaccurate or incorrect information or failure to make the necessary repairs from prior inspections.

Village code states that upon completion of the foundation for any building, a location plat of survey made by a registered land surveyor to show the exact location on the lot of the new foundation must be submitted to the Building Department within five (5) days. No further work may be done other than installing drain tile and waterproofing to the foundation until the foundation has been inspected and the plat of survey approved.

If you are encountering problems, need advice or specific information, or are unsure as to how to proceed, please contact the Building Department.

QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
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## IX. INSPECTIONS (cont'd)

All of the Village inspectors are trained, certified professionals in their field. While they cannot design your project, they are more than willing to assist you in ensuring your job is completed as quickly and easily as possible. If it is necessary to have an inspector stop by your project for assistance, please call the Building Department to set up a meeting time. There is no charge for this type of interim inspection assistance.

It is our goal to see that your project is completed quickly and correctly, with as little disruption or inconvenience as possible. If you wish to speak to the Building Commissioner directly, the best time to reach him is Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. or between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. when he is normally in the office. To reach the Plumbing Inspector, please call him at (847) 417-4181.

*For your own protection, you may wish to have the final inspection completed and approved by the Building Department prior to making the final payment to your contractors. Refundable bonds will not be returned until all final inspections, grading, drainage, etc. has been approved by the Village.*

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## X. STORM WATER DETENTION REQUIREMENT

Changing the grade of your property with berms, raised planting beds or retaining walls can have a significant impact on your property and your neighbor's property.

These changes affect the drainage patterns established by nature which were taken into consideration when the original site plans were developed. Installing a new driveway also impacts property drainage. A driveway paved with an impervious material (i.e. asphalt, concrete) does not absorb rainwater, but allows run-off to flow to the lowest points near it. Where the water goes and how it gets there are reviewed and regulated through the permitting process. The goal is to ensure that adjacent landowners are not negatively impacted.

The Village's Storm Water Management Ordinance was adopted in an attempt to control newly created run-offs caused by house additions, patios, walks, driveways, etc. All house remodeling and new construction are monitored by permits and made to conform to Village ordinances and codes.

Developments or remodeling projects resulting in the cumulative installation of impervious ground having a surface area of 1,000 square feet or more require providing storm water detention to accommodate storm water runoff. For projects that result in less than 1,000 square feet of impervious ground coverage, the property owner has the option to pay \$4.50 for each square foot of new impervious surface or provide the appropriate detention. Credit is given for any impervious surface that is being removed.

Renovations made without a permit can lead to fines or in some cases, the property must be returned to its prior state. Permits for reconstructing or adding a driveway, patio or sidewalk or any other impermeable surface area and for grading work are available in the Building Department. Permits are not required for seal coating or patching existing driveways.

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## XI. TREE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

As a Tree City USA and in response to community concerns, the Village Board adopted a Tree Preservation Ordinance effective May 1, 2003, which requires a permit for the removal of any tree located within one of the setback areas as noted in the table below. This ordinance is an effort to preserve the good quality trees and character of the community. Not all trees are regulated under this ordinance. Only those that fall within the required front or side yard setback. If a tree is not located within one of these areas, no permit is required.

Permits can be obtained through the Building Department at Village Hall, 361 Happ Road. If you have any questions on this program, please contact Linnea O'Neill at (847) 784-3555.

District	Front Yard Setback	Side Yard Setback
R-1	40'	15'
R-2	37'	13'
R-3	35'	10'
R-4	30'	7'
R-5	30'	6'

The cost for a Tree Permit is as follows:

Dead or Diseased Tree Removal Fee.....	No Fee
<i>A permit is still required unless your tree contractor writes a letter to the Village with the following information: 1) Name and address of property owner; 2) Location of tree(s); and 3) Type of tree disease. Please send this information to the Village before the tree removal takes place.</i>	
Tree Protection due to Remodeling/Construction.....	No Fee
Escrow only .....	\$1,000.00
Healthy Tree Removal and Single Family Addition.....	\$225.00
Plus escrow.....	\$1,000.00
New Construction, Commercial Developments & Subdivisions	\$300.00
Plus escrow.....	\$500.00
Landscape Plan Review Fee.....	\$150.00
Plus escrow.....	\$500.00

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## XII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q. How long is the building permit valid?**  
A. *Work authorized by a permit must begin within six months and be completed within eighteen months of the date the permit was issued. Work extending beyond this time frame requires the approval of the Building Commissioner. Please call the Building Department if you foresee problems with this time frame.*
- Q. What is the purpose of the refundable bond?**  
A. *The bond provides an incentive to complete the work in the manner it was approved and to have the work inspected as required.*
- Q. When can I expect the bond to be refunded?**  
A. *The Building Department will process the refund after all requirements of the Village (i.e. final inspection, drainage, etc.) are completed and approved. Generally, it takes two to four weeks for the refund to reach you.*
- Q. Who or what is JULIE?**  
A. *JULIE stands for "Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators". The phone number is 1-800-892-0123. Within two working days from your call, representatives from each utility (not JULIE employees) will come out and mark the appropriate location of their buried lines using this color code: Yellow = Gas, Oil or Petroleum; Red = Electric; Orange = Telephone, Cable TV; White = Proposed Excavation; Pink = Temporary Survey*
- Q. Does the Village locate its underground utilities?**  
A. *The Public Works Department will locate underground Village utilities including sewer and water mains. You may call them at (847) 441-3810.*

QUESTIONS? CALL DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
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## XII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q. What is a "Stop Work" order?**  
A. *"Stop Work" order is issued for jobs that are not being completed in accordance with the approved plans or for jobs that were started without a permit. No work can take place on the site until the stop work order has been lifted.*
- Q. What if I want to make changes to my plans as work on the project progresses?**  
A. *Be sure to obtain permission from the Building Commissioner **prior** to making any changes to the approved permit plans.*
- Q. What do I do with the permit placard I was given?**  
A. *The permit placard should be displayed in a window of your home so it is visible from the street. It should remain on display until the final inspection has been made, the project approved and an occupancy permit has been issued.*
- Q. What inspections are required?**  
A. *Inspections are noted on the building permit placard in the order in which they are required.*
- Q. What is the difference between the plan review fee and the building permit fee?**  
A. *The plan review fee covers the cost of reviewing the plan for compliance with Village codes. The building permit fee covers the cost of processing the permit and inspecting the improvement.*

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### XIII. IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Village Hall	(847) 446-9200
Police	Non-emergency (847) 446-2131 Emergency 9-1-1
Fire Rescue	Non-emergency (847) 441-3800 Emergency 9-1-1
Public Works	(847) 441-3810
JULIE	1-800-892-0123
Northfield Township Office	(847) 724-8300
New Trier Township Office	(847) 446-8200

### XIV. BUILDING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Steve Gutierrez, Community Development Director  
Ronald Johnson, Building Commissioner/Electrical Inspector  
Chris Stanke, Administrative Secretary  
Harold Weil, Plumbing Inspector (part time Mon-Thur p.m. only)  
Linnea O'Neill, Village Planner (part time Tue, Wed & Fri)  
Russ Jensen, Village Engineer (part time Tue & Thur)

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