

Building Department

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Last I heard a new edition of the Florida Building Code as well as the Florida Fire Prevention Code is tentatively scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2012. I have not seen any final information related to what changes may occur but we will attempt to keep you informed as we know. Please make every effort on your part to get informed and be educated to avoid issues that may arise. The code in effect at the time of your completed application is the governing code for your project. This is a two way street. Any information that you get from your sources will be welcomed by this Building Department.

Help us help you. I have asked many times in the past for any suggestions that you may have for improved service from this department. We can and have made some changes within the resources we have available to be able to better do our jobs. Some things may not be possible but we certainly can look at any suggestions. One suggestion I have for you in submitting permit applications is to check your packages for completeness. Be sure all required documents are included. Submittal checklists are available online and in the office. I have offered to make available and provide copies of the checklist that we use in reviewing plans for single family homes with very limited response. I even previously wrote about an instance where I provided a copy of the checklist to the contractor at the counter while assisting him only to find it laying on the counter later in the day---It wasn't even taken with him. This is discouraging especially when complaints are received and we try to provide information related to what we are looking for on the plans. I will ask again that you take copies of the plan review checklist and give a copy to your designers. Our ability to provide efficient service begins with you. We can point fingers back and forth all day long or each of us can try to do our part.

There seems to be more and more owner/builder permit requests coming through this office in the last few months. While owner/builder permits are allowed under the provisions in the law, it sometimes is indicative of unlicensed activity. A couple weeks ago we were able to stop an unlicensed contractor's attempt to be a "consultant" when it was explained to the owner the ramifications of owner/builder permitting and insurance requirements. A licensed contractor was hired and is doing the job. If you see or suspect suspicious activity in Flagler County, Flagler Beach or Beverly Beach please let us know. If it is in the City of Palm Coast, let them know.

"Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad." The same concept goes with enforcing building codes. Knowledge of the code is not good enough—the application and intent of the code is the wisdom.

Gary Hiatt, CBO
Flagler County

