

# PERMITS

## ***Permits that may be required***

Building/Structural Permit

Electrical

Plumbing

HVAC

Wells & Septic Systems

## ***The Legal World vs. The Real World***

### Legal World

Don't need permit to paint or to install floor covering.

You may only do minor repairs (e.g., replacing rotten 2"x4"s) without a building/structural permit.

Without an electrical permit you can only change the switch and outlet covers.

Without a plumbing permit you can only change washers in a faucet.

You cannot install or replace HVAC equipment without a permit.

You may not add on to existing structures without a structural permit.

Foundation repair requires a permit whether it is slab or pier and beam.

New driveways and sidewalks need to be permitted.

Even a roof requires a permit in the City of Houston.

### Real World

Many real estate investors seldom get permits, but anyone can call the City Engineering or permit Department and tattle on you.

Caught without a permit? Permit costs double plus City Inspectors now look at your project under a microscope. End result – costs skyrocket.

## ***When are permits essential to get?***

When rehabbing in high visibility areas such as the Heights, Oak Forest, Garden Oaks and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward.

When you have so much trash haul you need a dumpster on site.

When you're rehabbing more than 50% of the property value, the whole building must be brought to current code.

When adding on to an existing structure.

New construction.

When you are demolishing an old building.

When you are re-building a burn out.

If no electric lines to house, call Reliant Energy before you buy the house.

If electric meter is missing, call Reliant Energy for required steps to follow.

If gas meter is missing, call Reliant Energy for required steps to follow.

### ***Who gets the permits?***

Either you or your general contractor should pull the Building/Structural Permit. If the contractor is responsible for pulling the permit, make sure the permit is pulled in your name (this avoids problems if you need to subsequently fire your contractor). Put this in your contract with your contractor. Master plumbers and Master electricians and HVAC contractors pull permits under your building/structural permit.

### ***Other Cities***

Smaller or outlying cities have their own codes and their own enforcement staff. Always visit the engineering department or permit department of the municipality you want to work in before you buy a property there. If you go to them first, they will explain to you what they expect. If you try to trick them, they can become very difficult, and make your project a nightmare.

### ***Unincorporated areas in Harris and other counties***

Most counties have minimal permit/inspection requirements. Visit the county in which you will be rehabbing property to determine their permit/inspection requirements.