



THE LAWRENCE LIFT NEWSLETTER

A LAWRENCE CHRISTMAS

Kick off the Christmas season with a Lawrence Christmas tradition that you and your family will not want to miss!

Festivities begin at 4:00pm and the Lawrence Christmas parade begins at dusk with the annual tree lighting to follow. This is an event that your whole family will enjoy. The Sterrett Center has a kids' zone which includes face painting, ornament decorating, coloring contest and Santa's mailbox.

Festivities will be held at 8950 Otis Ave, Lawrence, IN 46216

We hope to see you there!

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ISSUE

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Dear Lawrence Utility Customer,

This month I would like to address permitting and contractor licensing issues. I know there have been complaints about this being a process that is too difficult or too cumbersome to navigate, by both property owners and contractors. And yes, there is a lot of paperwork. And permits and licenses cost money. And it does seem strange that a contractor working in Lawrence,

which is located entirely within Marion County, has to have a Marion County license as well as a Lawrence license to perform work in Lawrence. Not to mention separate bonding and insurance for both entities. But these are not "new" complications. These rules have been in place since UNIGOV was adopted. We in the DPW/Permitting and Inspections area take care to ensure that we are following the ordinances and requirements of both Marion County and Lawrence. Believe me, it is not in our game plan to make things any more complicated than they are, and in fact I know that our staff always try to make things as easy as possible by providing information, forms and tips for faster processing. But there are certain things that do have to happen in order for your project to be completed successfully. And remember, the whole point of all these rules and requirements is to ensure that the property owner, as well as the City, see projects done per the prevailing codes.

This article is not meant to be an exhaustive explanation of all permitting requirements. The City's DPW strongly encourages property owners to do some advance research and planning before just hiring a contractor and starting work. The DPW page on the City's website contains a wealth of information along with our local ordinance, which can be viewed here: <http://library.amlegal.com/>. When you google this link, simply navigate to "library", then click on the Indiana in the map or use the "select a state" pull-down menu, then select Indiana. This will bring up a list of Indiana cities, from which you may then select Lawrence. This will take you to the entire City of Lawrence code of ordinances, in which you will find "building regulations" and all the various requirements regarding permitting and contractor licensing.

Again, the most important thing to do before undertaking a project in Lawrence, or any other jurisdiction for that matter, is to do some research and find out what exactly is required. It is the responsibility of the property owner and their contractor(s) to ensure that all the proper permitting and licensing is secured prior to commencing any work. As a property or business owner, you need to take the lead in ensuring compliance with permitting and licensing. When you shop around for a contractor, be sure and ask if they are licensed, bonded and insured to

work in Lawrence. If they are not, then don't hire them unless and until they do get the required license, or find one that is licensed. You may also call Lawrence DPW at (317) 545-8787 or (317) 545-5566 to check if a contractor has a valid license to work in Lawrence.

You may also find out what kind of permits may be required for your project. Sometimes, permits are not required, like for certain kinds of work costing less than \$1,500. Some projects also require Improvement Location Permits through Marion County, aka "ILP's". Room additions, decks over 200 square feet or 18-inches above grade, are just a couple examples. The ILP, in simple terms, is how Marion County ensures that projects meet zoning requirements. They check for things like maintaining required green space versus impervious space on a lot, building setback requirements, height of additions, and other things like this. Marion County can issue Stop Work Orders in Lawrence for failure to have an ILP when one is required. It is worth a few minutes of your time to check first before launching into a project.

Most permits do require plans to be submitted along with the permit applications. Depending on the type of permit, you can get one at the time application is made, or, for larger projects, it can take several days or a couple weeks while plans are reviewed, and any comments/requests the plan reviewer may have, are addressed by the architect or engineer. The process of review and revision goes on until the City is satisfied that the plans meet requirements. Once there is a final set of plans, and an ILP obtained and copy submitted to Lawrence DPW (if one is required), the last thing to do is pay the appropriate fees and obtain the permit(s) for your project. Your contractor, or you (there are allowances

for certain types of work to be done by the homeowner) if you are doing the work, will need to make sure the permits are properly displayed (must be visible from the street) and you or your contractor must also call in for various inspections that are required. Again, all of this information is easily obtained by simply contacting Lawrence DPW, who can answer your questions or direct you to the information on-line.

Speaking of on-line, we are diligently working on getting our electronic permitting and contractor licensing features set up so that all of this can be done on-line, from permit application/plan submittals to scheduling inspections as well as applying for or renewing contractor licenses. While I do not have a roll-out date for that yet, I can assure you we are working on getting it all sorted out and ready to go. This will make permitting and licensing easier, faster and more efficient for all.

A final word about Inspections. Lawrence Inspectors not only perform scheduled inspections on projects that have been properly permitted, but they also spot work that is being done without proper permits and by contractors who are not properly licensed. The City ordinance in Section 2-1-1-23. RIGHT TO ENTER, states that "Upon presentation of proper credentials, the Building Commissioner or his or her duly appointed subordinates shall have the power to make an entry at any reasonable hour into any building or premises where the work of altering, repairing or constructing of any building or structure is going on or where a use and occupancy is occurring for the purpose of making an inspection or performing any duty imposed upon them by this code."

City of Lawrence Inspectors are also authorized to issue Stop Work Orders, per

Section 2-1-1-25 (A), which states that, "The Building Commissioner and his or her subordinates shall have the power to order all work stopped on any construction, alteration, repair, installation, removal or demolition of buildings in the City if the work is being done in violation of any provision of this Building Code, any statute or ordinance relating thereto, or the zoning ordinances of Marion County (i.e. the "ILP") as adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission.

In summary, these rules and regulations are in place to protect property owners, contractors and the City, basically everyone involved in the process, so that your home improvement investments are done properly and in compliance to all applicable codes. We ensure that contractors are properly licensed, bonded and insured so that, should something go wrong on your project, that you have recourse to the protection provided by the bond and insurance. If you are contemplating a home improvement project, please take the time to contact DPW, spend whatever time it takes to make sure you know everything that is required in order to complete your project successfully and in compliance with the codes that are in place to ensure your home's improvement projects are properly constructed or repairs are done properly.

Thank you,



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Note: The contents contained herein are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice.