



Remodeling Projects - One and Two Family Homes

809 N. Broadway / Milwaukee, WI 53202-3617 / 414-286-8211

If you want to do a home remodeling project, you must submit plans to the Milwaukee Development Center before a permit can be issued. The plans will be examined by a plan examiner to ensure they conform to the State of Wisconsin building code and the Milwaukee building and zoning codes. For homes built prior to 1980 the SE Wisconsin Alterations and Remodeling Guidelines may be used. The Development Center is located at 809 N. Broadway, 1st floor.

[Click here](#) then scroll down for current office hours.

Plan evaluation

Here are some of the items the plan examiner looks for when evaluating plans for residential remodeling:

- There must be two legal exits from the second floor. Second floor alterations in single-family houses can typically use adequately sized windows as a second exit, while third floor attics require two exits by means of stairs that comply with the building code. See the State of Wisconsin building code for details.
- 50% of the floor space in the remodeled rooms must have ceilings at least 7'-0" high. Windows must be sized in proportion to the size of the room to provide adequate natural light and ventilation.
- Existing floor joists must be sufficient to support the new rooms and may need to be reinforced.
- New stairs must have headroom clearance of at least 76".

Submitting plans

You need to bring three copies of the plans for the project to the Development Center. The plans must:

- Be drawn to scale.
- Show the location and size of the rooms involved.
- Show the size and location of doors, windows and ceiling heights.
- Show tread and riser dimensions of any new stairs.

- Label how the rooms will be used (bedroom, office, etc.).

Alterations to existing homes, regardless of how minor they may appear, often involve a variety of building code issues. An appointment to have the plans for the project reviewed is required. To make an appointment, call (414) 286-8210.

Permit and fees

Building permits for remodeling a one or two-family home must be taken out by either the homeowner or a contractor licensed by the State of Wisconsin and City of Milwaukee.

You will be charged a fee for the plan examination, and a fee for the building permit. Permit fees are based on the cost of materials and labor to build the project, excluding the cost of HVAC, electrical, plumbing, furniture, equipment and decorating cost.

For information regarding fees [Click here](#).

Inspections

When your permit is issued, you'll be instructed how and when to call a building inspector, who will look at the work at various stages of completion.

Associated permits

A licensed electrician must obtain *electrical permits* if the project involves electrical work. If a bathroom or kitchen is installed, the homeowner or a licensed plumber must obtain *plumbing permits*. If your remodeling affects the exterior of your home, and your home is located in a locally-designated historic district, you must receive a *certificate of appropriateness* from the Historic Preservation Commission before the permit can be issued.