

## Jurisdiction Survey Results

### Foundation-Only permitting

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#### Questions:

1. Do you allow foundation only permits?
2. If so, under what conditions?
3. What must they submit for permit?
4. What departments look at the application before granting approval?

#### Responses:

1. We allow foundation only permits. They must pay the full permit fee for the entire project so valuation e entire home up front, so we know they are vested in the entire project. They submit DD and CD of foundation with engineering soils reports and mine hazards as we have coal mines throughout the city. Planning, Building Look at the plan as far as setbacks, height survey, ILC or ISP, soils report.
2. We allow them, as requested. We issue a separate permit, fee based on 10% of the total valuation. We just used the plans for the total package typically, so that it is all together. If it is a staging issue, we allow a foundation-only plan.  
Same as regular submittal, in addition to Building, Planning Engineering Development Review, and Water/Sewer must all sign off on F&F's.  
The permit allows them to do everything below grade, nothing vertical. Although we have issued permits for superstructure framing (red iron) a couple of times.
3. We never allow foundation only permits for residential. For commercial we will occasionally allow it, but typically we do not encourage it. They would need to submit engineered foundation plans. It has to go through Zoning and Building.
4. Circumstantial Only. Not offered unless they are far enough into the approval of the plan review process to see all forces imposed on it and trades that will affect it. Require full set of plans for entire building. Departments involved include Planning/Zoning, building, and fire at a minimum. Owner assumes and agrees to risk.
5. We will allow a foundation only for commercial.  
The submittal shall contain all plans for the entire structure, and the foundation cannot be finaled until a building permit has been issued.
6. We only fast track for commercial projects, at there own risk. Planning , Public works , Building and Fire Approve
7. We do allow it if the building has been approved for a fast track project. ReQUIRES CDs showing foundation, utilities and building core/shell as minimum. Looked at by Building, Public Works, Planning and Fire.
8. we do not issue foundation only permits. In order to perform a comprehensive plan review we would need to know all of the loads imposed by the structure. We occasionally issue a permit restricted to the underground and foundation only once all the structural and major architectural items have been addressed. Typically, in order to issue a restricted permit, the plan review is complete, and we are waiting on other departments to hash out any remaining items.
9. We do everything we can to avoid foundation only permits. We have had nothing but problems with them. We have had a few over the years, but we usually do not allow them.

10. We do issue foundation only permits. A submittal must provide a site plan, floor plan, code study, soils report, foundation plan and any underground utility plans that may be inspected prior to pouring foundation. All departments must approve the foundation only prior to permit.
11. No! I hate folks starting prior to full review. Just allowing someone to dig during a review can get them in trouble. I have worked where it was allowed. Full permit submittal with a separate set of structural drawings for the footing. Planning approval required and the structural engineer of record was to inspect and provide a stamped letter regarding rebar and hold down placement.
12. We do not allow any foundation only permits for residential or commercial.
13. We do allow them on occasion. It's a small jurisdiction and I make the decision based on my knowledge of the situation. They have to submit the full permit first and I normally call Public Works and Zoning to make sure they don't have any issues before I pull the trigger.
14. We do allow foundation only permits if they request it and give us a reason why. Every thing that is going to be part of the structural part of the foundation, floors etc. and any plumbing , electrical etc. that will be under the foundation and a site plan showing set back from property lines etc must be submitted. Foundation permits cover everything 1ft or less about the finished floor. We also spell out everything the permit will covers. Gets reviewed by planning/zoning and building.
15. We do not issue them.
16. Yes, we allow them. They must submit the full set of plans and full application before they can request a foundation permit. In addition to the full set of plans they must submit a 2<sup>nd</sup> set that is below-grade items only (engineered foundation plan, underground plumbing, etc). All city departments must approve foundation permits and full issue permits in order for the customer to get the foundation only permit.
17. We allow FND only permits:  
Condition is it's at their risk because full building permit is not a guarantee just because a foundation only permit is issued. If it determines the design of the building doesn't meet code or zoning (or any other reason), then they may have to remove or reconstruct the foundation as necessary to come into compliance.  
We have a "No guarantee of full building permit issuance" waiver they must sign and submit prior to FND only permit issuance  
They need to submit engineered foundation plans, site plan, plumbing and electrical if included with the foundation only permit application, and special inspections agreement.  
They also need to submit building plans that are far enough along so the overall project is known, but it doesn't get a full review because time typically doesn't allow it which is why they want the FND permit to begin with  
They need the following approvals prior to FND only permit issuance:  
Building safety, Planning Public works (applicant will need a grading permit and erosion control plan with public works before they will sign-off on a FND only permit), Water & sanitation (if to include underground plumbing)  
Depending on the serving fire district, they may need their approval as well for emergency response requirements (we have two serving fire district's; one wants involved with FND only approval and the other one does not).  
Currently we have a flat fee for a FND permit but are looking into changing that to valuation fees being applied instead of a flat fee.

#### **Lessons learned:**

We've issued many FND only permits and have had only one that ran into issues later down the road which was for an addition that turned out to be larger than allowed by code, so they had to scramble to come up with a solution (which they did with some help). Even though they knew it was at their own risk, they still wanted to place blame on the building department as if it were the building departments fault for not letting them know of this in advance (hard to do when

they are pushing for a FND only permit without 100% building plans which is why they have to submit a signed waiver of acknowledgement that it's at their own risk and full building permit is not a guarantee; it's the design professional they should look to for any issue such as this, not the building department).

The biggest thing we would point out is even if they sign an at risk waiver, if something doesn't meet the code after the full building review is complete and the foundation needs changes, they may want to blame the building department for approving a FND only permit (in other words, why was an FND permit issued if the building didn't comply; this shows the waiver may be signed just so they can get started seemingly without thinking of the consequence if a problem actually arises).

There are times when full plans are provided but they want a FND only permit as well to get started which we can also do, but the same requirements apply as noted above and full building permit is still not a guarantee if they want to start before full building review is complete.

Inspection tracking can be time consuming. Are underground plumbing and electrical inspections included? Are they called in under the FND permit or full building permit? We find inspections are called in under whatever permit is available at the time and not necessarily under the proper permit.

UFER inspection? Be sure to include this as a required inspection since it's typically part of the building footing steel (if an available alternate isn't approved). Will the UFER be offered as a special inspection and require an engineers stamped inspection report, or is it to be performed by the AHJ's inspector?

When issuing a COO (or TCO), you want to be sure the FND permit requirements are satisfied and closed out as well so you don't have open permits that should no longer be open.

18. The following clip from our amendments answers most of the questions. Regarding what departments look at it, the answer is every department that would look at a full building submittal.

**SECTION 135**  
**FOUNDATION PERMITS**

**135.1 General.** A foundation permit and/or platform/podium permit may be issued prior to the issuance of the construction permit for all buildings and structures, except one- and two-unit dwellings, *International Residential Code* and *International Building Code* designed townhomes or rowhomes, and miscellaneous structures, to a contractor who holds a license qualifying him/her as the general contractor for the entire project, provided that:

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1. The total valuation of the project, excluding utilities, exceeds \$1,000,000 or as *approved* by the *building official*.
2. Drawings of the proposed superstructure containing sufficient detail relating to the design of the foundation or substructure, including floor plans, elevations and other pertinent information shall be submitted to the Agency with a watermark “for information only”. Structural calculations shall be submitted to validate the gravity and lateral load design of footings, caissons and all other foundation permit elements.
3. A complete code analysis for the entire building including egress plans is provided to the Agency.
4. Approvals required by the appropriate City agencies are obtained prior to issuance of the permit.
5. For purposes of the Section, the term “Project” shall mean one building only with a valuation in conformance with Section 138.

**135.2 Fee.** The plan review fee and the permit fee charged at the time of issuance of the foundation permit shall be as set forth by the *building official* in policy.

**135.3 Deviations.** Any deviation from the accepted foundation permit drawings shall be cause for the cancellation of the permit. However, if changes are substantiated by engineering calculations and revised drawings, the deviations may be *approved* by the *building official*.

**135.4 Responsibility.** The contractor shall assume full responsibility for the installation of all utilities in the substructure. Any changes to completed foundations necessitated by subsequent modification in design or construction to meet the requirements of this Code for the combined structure shall be the sole responsibility of the contractor. A permit issued under this Section shall not be construed as approval for any portion of the structure not covered by the foundation permit.

**135.5 Not Applicable.** Foundation permits are not applicable to phased or design-build construction, single family, duplex, or townhouse projects.