

Rebuilding and Repairing structures damaged/destroyed in the Cameron Peak Fire



We understand that the task you are about to undertake can be daunting. We empathize with you and want to help. The information below is a guideline to assist you during the rebuilding process. Please do not hesitate to contact our office for assistance at 970-498-7670.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is a demolition permit required for structures damaged or destroyed by the Fire?

Answer: For structures entirely destroyed by the fire, no permit is required. However, property owners are encouraged to contact our office to register this information. For a structure that was damaged but not destroyed, a demolition permit is required, to ensure all utilities are capped or removed, all debris is removed and to delete the building from county records. A permit is required even if the work is being done by volunteers or a volunteer agency. County demolition permit fees will be waived for buildings damaged in the fire.

Q: Is a grading permit or other review necessary to fill in a foundation?

Answer: Larimer County does not require a permit for earthwork. You may cover a concrete foundation with dirt; however, other burn debris cannot be buried.

Q: Do I need any permits from the State?

Answer: The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has issued guidelines for handling ash, debris, metal and concrete. For more information, please see CDPHE's handout called "Asbestos: Cameron Peak Fire" or call CDPHE or Larimer County Health Dept.

Q: Do I have to remove debris from my property even if I don't plan to rebuild?

Answer: Certain materials such as asbestos or other hazardous materials or structures are deemed imminent risks to health and safety and must be removed by October 31, 2023.

Q: Can I take burned debris to the county landfill?

Answer: The Larimer County Landfill is authorized to accept ash and debris from building damaged in the fire. Certain requirements apply (see handout referenced in FAQ #3). You must notify the landfill before bringing the load to confirm acceptance. Please contact the Larimer County Solid Waste Department at 970-498-5760.

Q: Do I need a building permit to replace damaged or destroyed structures?

Answer: In most cases, yes. Detached accessory storage buildings (sheds) up to 120 sq. ft. in floor area and one story maximum do not need a permit, unless they have electrical, plumbing, gas or heating, in which case they will need a miscellaneous permit. Any buildings larger than that, or used for residential purposes, require a building permit, whether they originally had a permit or not. All buildings must follow Land Use Code requirements including setbacks.

Q: Do I need a permit to repair fire-damaged buildings?

Answer: Possibly. A repair permit is needed for work including structural, electrical, plumbing and mechanical, but not for replacement of finish materials, insulation, cabinets and fixtures. For repair permits, an inspection by a licensed Colorado Professional Engineer is required to determine the degree of damage and what is needed to restore the building's structural integrity. The engineer's inspection/repair letter, plans and/or specifications must be submitted with the building permit application. Volunteers/volunteer agencies still need permits.

Q: Is my building "grandfathered in" under older building codes?

Answer: New and replacement buildings must be built in compliance with current building codes, including wind resistance and energy efficiency. Some aspects of repairs to existing buildings may be done under the building code in effect at the time the building permit was obtained, or the 1970 Uniform Building Code for buildings constructed prior to January 1, 1972.

Q: Is my building "grandfathered in" under older zoning codes?

Answer: Residents and businesses may request a determination from the Community Development Director that a building, structure, or use is or is not a legal nonconforming building, structure, or use. The Board of County Commissioners has authorized special provisions as outlined in Chapter 11 of the Land Use Code to provide some degree of flexibility in addressing nonconforming "grandfathered" buildings, structures or uses.

Q: Will the county waive or reduce building permit fees in the Fire Burn Area?

Answer: The County wants to support Larimer County residents impacted by the fire while being fair and responsible with County resources. Insurance policies should cover building permit fees for replacement structures and repairs/alterations. Property owners who are not insured or underinsured may apply for a fee reduction or waiver to the county Community Development Director. A written determination will be provided to the applicant within thirty (30) days from the date of the written appeal. Please see Fee Reduction/Waiver form.

Sales and use tax collection fees attached to building permits cannot be waived.

Transportation capital expansion fees (TCEFs) may be due depending on when the building was built, whether it had a permit, and the size of the replacement. Please see TCEF handout.

Q: Can I live on the property in an RV or temporary housing while I rebuild?

Answer: For the duration of the re-build program, a property owner may obtain a permit for temporary emergency housing when certain conditions are met. See Temporary Emergency Housing handout, contact the Planning Division at 970-498-7679, or email: poc@larimer.org.

Q: What do I do if I want to rebuild a structure in a different place on my property?

Answer: There are several types of setback requirements. These include setbacks required by zoning district, setbacks from state and federal highways and county roads, setbacks from streams, creeks, and rivers (waterways), and setbacks required by other restrictions placed on a property such as easements or building envelopes. Also, there are other types of building location and use restrictions and requirements that may need to be addressed before applying for a building permit. If you have any questions on the proposed location or use of your property, please contact the Planning Division (970-498-7679, or email poc@larimer.org) prior to applying for a building permit to minimize disruptions to the rebuilding process. Certain special provisions contained in Chapter 11 of the Land Use Code have been enacted and may provide flexibility in planning the rebuild.

Q: How long does it take to get through development review and get a final decision?

Answer: Review times and hearing requirements vary, depending on the specific process involved. We'll be able to give you an estimated time for completing a specific process. The development review process and schedule is intended to meet State-mandated legal notice requirements and the needs of the applicant, many different internal and external reviewing agencies, nearby property owners, planning staff, the applicable County advisory boards, and the Board of County Commissioners. Within the parameters set by the State, Larimer County has established a process for each type of development application, with specific steps that occur in sequential order and specific time deadlines that must be met for the process to continue on schedule. It is staff's goal to move applications through these review processes as quickly as possible without hampering the ability of interested and involved parties to conduct a thorough review. If you have concerns about the review time for a specific development application, please contact the staff planner assigned to that project.

Q: Do I need a permit to repair fire-damaged buildings?

Answer: Possibly. A repair permit is needed for work including structural, electrical, plumbing, or mechanical, but not to replace finish materials, insulation, cabinets or plumbing fixtures. An inspection by a licensed Colorado Professional Engineer is required to determine the nature of any structural damage and specify repairs needed to restore the building's structural integrity. The engineer's inspection letter/plans must be submitted with the building permit application.

Q. Does the Building Division have a copy of construction plans for my home?

Answer: Probably not. Typically, after six months from the date final inspection approval is obtained, residential plans were discarded. However, the Building Division retains the names of engineers and architects on file who may have copies of plans, as well as plot plans showing the location of structures, square footage, number of bedrooms, etc. Call the Building Division at (970) 498-7670 for more information and to see what plans we may have on file.

Q: Will floodplain requirements be waived for fire-damaged properties?

Answer: No, floodplain rules cannot be waived. Please check with Larimer County Engineering Department to determine if your property falls within a FEMA-designated floodplain, which may affect your building process and design. For floodplain information, call 498-5700.

Non-conforming Buildings, Structures, and Uses

A “nonconforming” building, structure use or lot is one that was legal and conformed to the County Land Use and Building Codes at the time it was established, or predated those codes, but no longer conforms to updated regulations.

If a nonconforming building, structure, or use is damaged by 50 percent or more of the replacement cost by a fire, the property owner may only repair or replace the nonconforming building or structure if he/she submits a complete building permit application by October 31, 2023. The nonconforming building or structure may only be replaced in the same location, size, and character as the original. Damaged or destroyed nonconforming buildings or structures must meet floodplain overlay district requirements. Please see floodplain handout.

Helpful Contact Numbers

Asbestos Mitigation/Removal –
State of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 303-692-3100
<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/categories/services-and-information/environment/asbestos>

Access Permits (County Roads):
Larimer County Engineering Department
970-498-5700 www.larimer.org/engineering

Building/Electrical/Demolition Permits, Permit fees and building code questions:
Larimer County Building Division
970-498-7670 www.larimer.org/building

Disposal Requirements and Dump Fees:
Larimer County Landfill
970-498-5760 www.larimer.org/solidwaste

Flood & drainage information:
Larimer County Engineering Department
970-498-5700 www.larimer.org/engineering

Modular, manufactured and mobile homes: for inspection and installation requirements –
CO Division of Housing/Building Codes and Standards Section 303-864-7836
<https://cdola.colorado.gov/office-regulatory-oversight>

Pine Beetle/Ash Borer Information:
Larimer County Natural Resources
970-498-5765 www.larimer.org/forestry/

Property Assessments:
Larimer County Assessor’s Office
970-498-7050 www.larimer.org/assessor

Setbacks: **Larimer County Planning Division**
970-498-7683 www.larimer.org/planning

Sewage Disposal Systems /Permits: **Larimer County Department of Health and Environment**
970-498-6775 <http://larimer.org/health/ehs/isds.asp>

Utility Locate Service: 811 or 1-800-922-1987

Utility Providers in the area:

- **Century Link** 800-244-1111
- **Poudre Valley REA** 800-432-1012

Transportation Permits: for transporting heavy loads over County roads, including manufactured homes -
Larimer County Engineering Department
970-498-5700 www.larimer.org/engineering

Well information –
CO Division of Water Resources 970-352-8712
<http://www.dwr.state.co.us/WellPermitSearch/default.aspx>

Zoning Information:
Larimer County Planning Division
970-498-7683 www.larimer.org/planning

Building Permits

A building permit is required for all new and replacement homes, cabins, barns, garages, and sheds over 120 square feet in floor area, throughout Larimer County, including rebuilding in the fire area. Some repair work may not need a permit. New construction must follow the currently adopted building codes (2018 International Residential Code with local amendments). Because the fire area is also a High Wind/heavy snow area, engineered structural plans are required. An engineer will need to assess a burned foundation if you want to reuse it rather than pour a new one. County code amendments, a link to the 2018 building codes and more information is on our website at www.larimer.org/building. Please contact us at (970) 498-7660 or building@larimer.org with any questions about rebuilding.

For new or remodeled structures, the following information is required:

- 1 completed building permit application form
- 5 copies of a plot plan
- 2 copies of building plans (floor plans, structural plans stamped by a licensed Colorado professional engineer, elevations from all sides, sections/details, energy code plans).
- 1 slope profile (unless the foundation is engineered)
- Payment (check, cash or credit card) to begin the plan review process

Plans will be routed to the Larimer County Building and Planning Divisions, and Engineering and Health and Environment Departments to verify compliance with items including building codes, setbacks, floodplain regulations, and onsite wastewater treatment system requirements. Electrical plans are only required for installing a 400 amp or greater service. (Larimer County now issues electrical permits.)

After plans are reviewed, plans examiners will contact you for any corrections required. Once plans are approved, permit technicians will complete their review, invoice remaining fees, and notify you that the permit is ready to issue. Once the permit is issued, construction may begin.

Hiring Contractors, Electricians, Plumbers, and Others

A licensed contractor is required for construction in Larimer County, except for a homeowner working on their own home. A homeowner may also do electrical and plumbing work on their own home; anyone hired must have a state electrical or plumbing license. Volunteer agencies must be licensed.

Contractor licensing is to protect you from possible opportunists who may take advantage of people after a fire. Unlicensed contractors may lack insurance, experience, and knowledge. You could be left responsible for incomplete, unapproved, shoddy, or even dangerous work.

Please check with the county Building Division and state agencies before hiring anyone. Insist on seeing their contractor's license, insurance, and building permit before they begin. Do not sign a blank contract. Get everything in writing. Final payment should wait until you receive final inspection approval.

Websites to verify proper licensing:

- Larimer County Building Division (General and Specialized Trade Contractors) - https://onlineportal.larimer.org/EnerGov_Prod/citizenaccess/site/Public/Main
- Colorado Electrical Board (electricians) and Plumbing Board (plumbers) <https://apps.colorado.gov/dora/licensing/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>
- Colorado State Board of Licensure for Architects, Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors – <https://apps.colorado.gov/dora/licensing/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>

