

# Guilford Permit Guide

What permits do you need? A guide for Guilford residents.

Prepared by the Guilford Planning Commission, April 2026

This guide is intended as a starting point and does not replace a property owner's obligation to investigate all applicable local and state permitting requirements before beginning a project.

Guilford does not have zoning laws requiring building permits. However, several practical permits listed below must be obtained from the State or the Town prior to construction, as required by Vermont State Statute. These permits oversee required reporting for land conservation, preservation, and safety regulations. The various fees support the departments and agencies that implement and enforce the law. See the sections below for specific permits that apply to wastewater, flood zones, wetlands, electrical work, and other activities.

**Agency of Natural Resources disclaimer:** Prior to construction, you are responsible for identifying and obtaining all necessary State permits and approvals, including State environmental permits from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). You should contact State Agencies to determine which permits may be required for your project. For State environmental permits, you should visit the [Permit Navigator](#). If you need further assistance, you can reach out to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Environmental Assistance Office at ANR.DECAssistance@vermont.gov or 802-828-0141.

## Driveways and Roads

PROJECT	PERMIT	FEE
New or modified driveway accessing a <b>local road</b>	Guilford Driveway Permit <i>See: <a href="#">Driveway permit application</a> · <a href="#">Driveway ordinance</a></i>	\$15 recording fee
New or modified driveway accessing <b>Route 5 (Coolidge Hwy)</b> , state highway	<a href="#">State Highway Access and Work Permit</a>	No state fee; \$15/page recording with Town Clerk (usually 1 page)
Driving a vehicle heavier than the <b>posted weight limit</b> on a town road (contractors, gravel trucks, well drillers, tankers)	Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit required; must provide a Certificate of Insurance (\$100,000/\$300,000 personal injury liability, \$100,000 property damage). Reviewed by the Road Commissioner. Contact the Town Clerk to apply. <i>Permit must be carried in each vehicle during authorized movement (fleet permits exempt). Valid up to one year — all permits expire March 31.</i>	\$5 per single-vehicle permit; \$10 per fleet permit
Construction disturbing <b>1 or more acres</b> of land	<a href="#">Construction Stormwater Discharge Permit</a>	Varies

**Your driveway permit is also your address.** Guilford uses the driveway permit process to assign new E911 street addresses. If you're creating a new point of access that will eventually need an address, you need a driveway permit — even if construction will happen later.

**Driveways serving 3 or more houses.** If a new driveway will serve 3 or more houses — even on the same parcel — it triggers the creation of a new private road. Private roads must be named by the Selectboard before E911 addresses can be assigned. Plan to attend a Selectboard meeting for the road naming, and contact the Town Assessor Clerk / E911 Coordinator (through the Town Clerk's office) for the specific process and applicable statutes.

**Excess Weight Permits — for contractors working on your property.** Excess Weight Permits are required for any vehicle exceeding the posted weight limit on a Guilford town road. Homeowners who hire contractors for gravel delivery, heavy machinery work, well drilling, or tanker trucks should verify their contractor has a current permit — especially during mud season, when heavy vehicles cause the most damage to town roads. Permits are reviewed and approved (or denied) by the Road Commissioner, and applications are processed through the Town Clerk.

## Water, Wetlands, and Flood Zones

PROJECT	PERMIT	FEE
Construction in a <b>Special Flood Hazard Area</b>	State and/or local permit — start with the <a href="#">Vermont Flood Ready Atlas</a> to determine if your property is in a flood hazard area <i>See also: <a href="#">Guilford Flood Hazard Area Ordinance (2007)</a> · <a href="#">FEMA Flood Map Service Center</a></i>	—
* Construction in a mapped <b>River Corridor</b> (near a stream, brook, or river)	State permit (DEC) <i>See: <a href="#">Vermont Flood Ready Atlas</a></i>	—
† Construction in <b>wetlands</b>	State permit — Agency of Natural Resources <i>See: <a href="#">Landowner wetlands guide</a> · <a href="#">Check for wetlands before you build</a> · <a href="#">Wetlands Inventory Map</a> · <a href="#">Wetlands permits</a> · <a href="#">Permit navigator</a></i>	Varies
Activity moving <b>10+ cubic yards</b> in a perennial stream (culverts, bridges, streambank work)	<a href="#">Stream Alteration Permit</a>	Varies

If a waterway is on your property, start with the [Vermont Flood Ready Atlas](#) to see whether your project is in a flood hazard area. For questions, contact the Guilford **Flood Plain Administrator** (reach them through the Town Clerk's office).

**\* Effective January 1, 2028:** Under Act 121 (Flood Safety Act), no development may occur in a mapped river corridor without a state permit. A river corridor includes the meander belt (approximately 6 channel widths for mapped rivers) plus a 50-foot vegetated buffer on each side. Permitting rules are under development — check the [Vermont Flood Ready Atlas](#) and [DEC](#) for current guidance.

**† Clues you may be near wetlands:** soggy land, ponding, seeps, wetland plants, nearby streams or waterways.

## Septic and Wastewater

PROJECT	PERMIT REQUIRED?	FEE
New septic system, modifications, additions, or additional buildings	Yes <i>See: <a href="#">DEC Groundwater Protection Division FAQ</a> · <a href="#">DEC Wastewater Program</a></i>	Varies
Replacing septic tanks or pipes	No <i>See: <a href="#">DEC Groundwater Protection Division FAQ</a> · <a href="#">DEC Wastewater Program</a></i>	None
Leachfield work	Contact DEC Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division <i>See: <a href="#">DEC Wastewater Program</a> · <a href="#">DEC Information for Landowners</a></i>	Varies
Waterless toilet (composting, incinerating, privy)	Yes <i>See: <a href="#">DEC Information for Landowners</a> · <a href="#">DEC Wastewater Program</a> · <a href="#">Wastewater System &amp; Potable Water Supply Program</a></i>	Varies
New well	Required testing <i>See: <a href="#">Required testing for new wells</a></i>	—

Contact the Guilford Town Health Officer for local review of septic plans.

**Wastewater permit process.** Wastewater permits are acquired through the state and must be completed with a **Licensed Designer** (or authorized installer). Once the state approves the permit, certain pages marked "*Document for Recording*" must be recorded with the Guilford Town Clerk at **\$15 per page** (permits typically have 2–4 pages to record). When installation is complete, the installation certification must also be recorded with the Town Clerk (\$15 per page, usually 1 page).

*Note: Traditional pit privies/outhouses are not allowed in Vermont. Other waterless systems (composting, incinerating, vault and moldering privy) are highly regulated and typically require state approval – contact the Department of Environmental Conservation for guidance (see the Waterless toilet row above).*

## Electrical and Plumbing

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PROJECT	LICENSED PROFESSIONAL REQUIRED?
Electrical work – single-family, owner-occupied home	No <i>VT Electrical Safety Rules (2025)</i>
Electrical work – all other buildings (including accessory dwelling units (ADUs), rentals)	<b>Yes</b> – licensed electrician <i>VT Electrical Safety Rules (2025)</i>
Plumbing work – single-family, owner-occupied, not on public water/sewer	No <i>VT Plumbing Rules (2025)</i>
Plumbing work – all other buildings	<b>Yes</b> – licensed plumber <i>VT Plumbing Rules (2025)</i>

**Compliance note:** Even when a licensed professional is not required, electrical and plumbing work must still comply with current Vermont Electrical Safety Rules and Vermont Plumbing Rules. Inspection may be required for certain projects.

## Renovations in Older Homes

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PROJECT	REQUIREMENT
Renovation in a <b>pre-1978 owner-occupied home</b>	<a href="#">Lead-Safe Renovation, Repair, Painting and Maintenance (RRPM) licensed person</a> required if disturbing more than <b>1 sq ft per interior room</b> , more than <b>20 sq ft per exterior side</b> , or replacing any window
Renovation in a <b>pre-1978 rental or child care facility</b>	Stricter thresholds: licensed RRPM required if disturbing more than <b>1 sq ft per interior room or per exterior side</b> , or replacing any window. Ongoing lead-safe obligations under <a href="#">Inspection, Repair and Cleaning (IRC) Practices</a> (formerly EMP)
Demolition of any structure	<a href="#">Licensed asbestos inspector</a> must inspect before demolition

## In-Law Apartments and Accessory Dwelling Units

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PROJECT	REQUIREMENT
Accessory Dwelling Unit (in-law apartment, garage apartment, converted barn, etc.)	Wastewater and potable water review; electrical and plumbing work must be done by licensed professionals <i>See: <a href="#">ADU-How To Checklist (VT Dept. of Housing and Community Development)</a></i>

## Home Business

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PROJECT	REQUIREMENT
Running a business from home	No local permit required (no zoning). State triggers may apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food businesses — <a href="#">Dept. of Health</a> or Agency of Agriculture license</li> <li>• Regulated professions (cosmetology, massage, childcare, and many others) — state licensing through the <a href="#">Office of Professional Regulation</a></li> <li>• Increased water/sewage — wastewater permit amendment</li> <li>• Commercial activity, significant traffic, or operations on 1+ acres — <a href="#">Act 250</a></li> <li>• Business registration — <a href="#">Secretary of State</a>, tax ID</li> </ul>

## Rentals and Home Sales

A **short-term rental** is a furnished dwelling rented to paying guests for fewer than 30 consecutive days – typically through platforms like Airbnb or Vrbo. Short-term rentals have different requirements than long-term residential rentals.

PROJECT	REQUIREMENT	FEE
Short-term rental – <b>1 or 2 units, no prepared food</b> (most Guilford Airbnb/Vrbo hosts)	<b>No VT Dept. of Health lodging license required.</b> Must comply with Division of Fire Safety rental housing requirements and complete the Short-Term Rental self-certification form (see below) <i>See: <a href="#">Short-term rental checklist</a></i>	—
Short-term rental – <b>3 or more guest rooms, OR</b> fewer if prepared food is served	<a href="#">VT Dept. of Health Lodging License</a> required	—
Any short-term rental renting <b>15+ days per year</b>	Register for Vermont Meals and Rooms Tax (9%) + Short-Term Rental Surcharge (3%) – <b>total 12% collected from guests</b> <i>See: <a href="#">VT Dept. of Taxes – Short-Term Rentals</a> · Form MRT-441</i>	—
Sale of single-family home	<a href="#">Smoke/CO detector compliance certification</a>	None
Residential rental	<a href="#">Health and Safety Code</a> (complaint-based)	None

**Required for all short-term rentals.** Every Vermont short-term rental must complete the *Short-Term Rental Safety, Health and Financial Obligations* self-certification form – covering smoke/CO alarms, ground fault interrupter (GFI) outlets, egress in sleeping rooms, heating inspection, and railings – and **post it visibly inside the rental**. Required since August 2018. [Form from VT Division of Fire Safety](#).

**Pending legislation:** S.238 would add an additional 2% rooms tax surcharge with a proposed effective date of August 1, 2026. If it passes the current session, the total collected from Guilford short-term rental guests would rise from 12% to 14%. Check the [Vermont Department of Taxes](#) for current rates before collecting.

**Municipal rules may also apply.** Several Vermont towns (Dover, Mendon, Wilmington, Killington, Stowe, Woodstock) have adopted their own **short-term rental ordinances** — local laws that add requirements like registration, annual fees, occupancy caps, operator response rules, or zoning restrictions on top of the state rules above. Guilford does not currently have one, but local rules change frequently — check the [Guilford town website](#) each year for current local requirements.

**Rental resources:**

- [Resources for Renters and Landlords](#)
- [Home Share Vermont Program](#)
- [Warranty of Habitability Laws](#)
- [Vermont Housing Improvement Program \(VHIP\)](#) — funding for rental unit rehabilitation and rental ADU construction

**Burning**

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PROJECT	REQUIREMENT
<b>Burning household trash or garbage</b>	<b>Prohibited in Vermont — never allowed, regardless of permit status</b> <i><a href="#">Open burning guidelines</a></i>
Open burning of natural wood from property maintenance	Contact Fire Warden. Burn when <a href="#">air quality forecast</a> is favorable. <i><a href="#">Open burning guidelines</a></i>
Burning construction debris	Permit required. Contact Air Quality & Climate Division: (802) 661-8937

**Agriculture and Forestry**

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PROJECT	REQUIREMENT
New agricultural building (housing livestock, raising plants)	No permit required. Must notify the Town Clerk in writing with a site plan showing dimensions and setbacks. <i><a href="#">See: Farm Structures and How They're Regulated — Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM)</a></i>
Timber harvesting / logging	Generally exempt from Act 250 if following Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) <i><a href="#">See: Timber harvesting resource guide · AMPs guide</a></i>



## General Resources

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- [VT Licenses and Permits page](#) — navigate building, construction, and environmental permits
- [Permit Navigator](#) — tool to evaluate which permits might be needed
- **Guilford Town Clerk:** (802) 254-6857 ext. 107 · [townclerk@guilfordvt.gov](mailto:townclerk@guilfordvt.gov) · Open Monday through Thursday · [current hours](#)

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Questions or feedback? Contact Jeannette Tokarz, Chair, Planning Commission: [jeannettetokarzpc@gmail.com](mailto:jeannettetokarzpc@gmail.com)

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Current as of April 2026. Regulations change — verify before relying on this guide.