

County of Los Alamos


Building Safety Division

Policy: Expired Permits and Expired Permits Where Work Has Been Covered Without Inspection

Effective Date: May 1, 2017

Approved By: Michael Arellano (May 1, 2017)

Revised:


Elias Isaacson, CDD Director


Date

Policy: Expired permits cannot be reactivated or renewed. If a permit has expired without being closed out (no final inspection) then a new permit must be applied for covering the work that has not been completed or inspected. If work has been covered up that has not been inspected the work may have to be uncovered.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for addressing expired building permits and situations where permitted work has been covered or concealed without required inspections. This policy ensures compliance with state and local building codes, protects public safety, and maintains the integrity of the inspection and permitting process within the Los Alamos Building Safety Division.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all building permits issued by the Los Alamos Building Safety Division, including but not limited to residential, commercial, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing permits.

It governs:

- The handling of expired permits that have not received final inspection or approval.
- The process for obtaining new permits to complete or inspect previously permitted work.
- The requirements for exposing or uncovering work that was completed without required inspections.

This policy applies to property owners, contractors, and Building Safety Division staff involved in permit management, inspection, and enforcement.

3. Eligibility

This policy applies to:

- **Permit holders (contractors, homeowners, or authorized agents)** responsible for ensuring permits remain active until final inspection.
- **Building Inspectors and Permit Technicians** responsible for monitoring permit status and verifying closure or expiration.
- **The Building Official or designee** responsible for determining corrective measures for expired or noncompliant permits.

Only the current property owner or licensed contractor performing the work may apply for a new permit to cover expired or uninspected work.

4. Procedures

- **Permit Expiration**

- A permit automatically expires if:
 - Work authorized by the permit has not commenced within the time specified by the applicable code (typically 180 days), or
 - Work has been suspended or abandoned for a period exceeding the code-defined limit (typically 180 days).
- Once expired, the permit cannot be reactivated or renewed.

- **New Permit Application**

- If a permit has expired without being closed out or finalized, a **new permit** must be applied for to cover any remaining or uninspected work.
- The new permit must clearly describe the scope of work remaining and may be subject to additional plan review or inspections.
- Applicable permit and inspection fees must be paid at the time of reapplication.

- **Uninspected or Covered Work**

- If work has been completed and covered without inspection, the Building Official or inspector may require the work to be uncovered or exposed to verify code compliance.
- The extent of uncovering will be determined based on the type of work, risk to safety, and available documentation.
- In cases where uncovering may cause significant damage, the applicant may request an alternative verification method, such as engineering reports, testing, or other approved means, at the discretion of the Building Official.

- **Documentation and Recordkeeping**

- The original expired permit record shall be closed in the permit tracking system and marked as expired.
- A note must be added referencing the new permit number associated with the completion or verification of the previous work.
- Inspection records must indicate any required exposure or corrective measures.

5. Requirements

To comply with this policy:

- Expired permits cannot be reactivated, reinstated, or extended once the expiration period has lapsed.
- A new permit must always be obtained to cover unfinished or uninspected work.
- Any work completed without required inspections must be made accessible for inspection unless otherwise approved by the Building Official.
- Contractors and property owners are responsible for monitoring permit status and ensuring timely inspection and closure.
- Permit Technicians and Inspectors must accurately record expiration dates and document any re-permitting or corrective action in the permit system.

6. Enforcement

- Work performed under an expired permit is considered unpermitted construction and may be subject to enforcement action under applicable building codes and ordinances.
 - Enforcement measures may include:
 - Stop work orders,
 - Correction notices,
 - Administrative penalties or fines, or
 - Requirement to obtain a new permit and pay associated fees.
 - If concealed work cannot be verified for compliance, the Building Official may require the removal or replacement of unverified materials or assemblies.
 - Continued noncompliance may result in referral for code enforcement action or withholding of future permits.
- Staff who fail to follow this policy's verification or documentation procedures may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action in accordance with County personnel policies.