



**TECHNICAL BULLETIN**  
**Planning & Development Services**  
**Building Inspections Division**

**TOPIC: Residential Garage Conversions**

This Technical Bulletin will provide homeowners and contractors with information needed to determine if a residential garage conversion is feasible and what is required in order to obtain a building permit. Converting a residential garage into some other use requires a building permit.

**#1 – DETERMINE WHEN THE HOUSE WAS BUILT:**

- If the house was built before January 31, 1984, garage conversions are prohibited unless the required parking pads are located directly behind or on the side of the principal residential structure or in the street frontage building setback on a driveway that is at least 390 square feet in area. The parking pads must be located on the permit documents.
- If the house was built on or after January 31, 1984, garage conversions are prohibited unless another two-car garage is constructed on site. The new two-car garage must be located on the permit documents.

**#2 – APPLYING FOR A BUILDING PERMIT:**

- Completed & signed building permit application
- Two (2) copies of an overall floor plan of the house with details of the garage conversion including:
  - Location & type (gas/electric) of the hot water heater
  - Any walls to be removed
  - Any walls to be added
  - Any plumbing fixtures to be added/relocated/removed
  - Any electrical equipment to be added/relocated/removed
  - Any doors & windows to be added/relocated/removed
  - Energy compliance work sheet
  - Elevation of the converted garage view showing the exterior wall covering (the exterior wall covering must match the percentage of masonry on the remainder of the house)
- Two (2) site plans showing any added paving and driveways; or, the new two-car garage as follows:
  - If the new garage is less than 550 square feet, the exterior wall may be of any approved building material except metal. Roof pitch must be compatible with the primary structure.
  - If the new garage is 550 square feet or more, the exterior must be architecturally compatible with the primary residence, including but not limited to coordination of architectural style, exterior building materials and colors, roof form and pitch, window style and placement.

A homeowner residing in the house as his homestead may apply for a homeowners permit if the homeowner performs all the work and is not assisted by other persons for remuneration.

Please note that when your building permit for the garage conversion is approved, the following items must be verified code compliant before final approval:

- New electrical receptacles in the new habitable space will be required
- Insulation is required in new and existing walls and ceilings between the new habitable space and outside
- The entire house and converted garage must be fitted with smoke detectors – battery operated smoke detectors are acceptable for existing house
- The entire house and converted garage must be fitted with carbon monoxide detectors if the house contains any gas fired appliances and/or an attached garage
- If garage is to be converted to a sleeping room, a gas-fired water heater cannot be located in a closet that has access from a bedroom