



**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 – Garage Standards for Single-Family and Two-Family Residential Dwellings**

- a. An enclosed two-car garage is required for all single-family detached, townhouse, and duplex dwellings. The garage must be a minimum of 390 square feet in area.
- b. A garage is not required for dwellings constructed prior to January 31, 1984.
- c. A garage may not be converted to living space unless another two-car garage is constructed on the same lot. However, garage conversions are permitted for dwellings constructed prior to January 31, 1984, provided that a driveway of at least 20 feet in length, as measured from the front property line, is constructed to accommodate the same number of vehicles as the garage.
- d. Tandem parking is permitted only for residential townhouses with a single-car garage, provided that the driveway accessing the garage has a minimum length of 20 feet as measured from the front property line.

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

- Complete a building permit application online at [arlingtonpermits.com](https://www.arlingtonpermits.com)
- A 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 (sizes, U-factor, SHGC)
  - Energy compliance (insulation to be added, state R-value for ceiling/wall)
  - 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)
- A site plan
  - showing any added paving and driveways; or, the new two-car garage must comply with Section 3.3.5 and 3.3.6 of the UDC ([Unified Development Code](#))

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