

Round Foot^o Homes

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Steps to Building Department Cooperation

1. Find the local building department listing (this may also be called the community development department). This may be a town, city, county or state department.
 - a. Look first in the Government pages of the phone book. If you live out of the city or town limits, the building department will likely be in the county. A few states, such as New Mexico and Montana, have state building departments. If nothing turns up there, call the County/Town Clerk or information line and ask if there is a building department and how to contact them.
 - b. A second resource is the internet. Search for the town, city, or county by name, including the state initials. Links that end in “.gov” will be your best bet. Under the government website, find the link for “The Building Department”, “Community Development”, or something similar. If there is not a direct link, find the link for departments, government offices, or something similar. Under the building department webpage, find the residential link under new building permits. Don’t be confused by links for licensing (these refer to licenses for business owners allowing them to conduct business in the area). Find the links for downloads, permit forms or something similar. You can download the forms and save them to your computer.
2. When you find the contact information for the building department, call them and ask the following questions:
 - a. **What is the local building code for new residential construction?** Most local codes will be based on the International Building Code (IBC), usually the 2006 edition. It updates every 3 years, but the local building department adopts or amends the IBC as they see necessary. Some building departments follow the International Residential Code (IRC), a version of the IBC. The IRC lists prescriptive standards (a prescribed list of foundation systems, floor joists, wall studs, roof rafters, etc.) for types of construction, as opposed to calculation standards as listed in the IBC.
 - b. **What is the local energy code?** This is usually part of the IBC, but the building department may have revisions or stricter requirements with the growing popularity of more energy efficient housing. Round Foot Homes are very energy efficient and will surpass the IBC energy code requirements.
 - c. **What are the environmental loading requirements?** These include snow load, wind load, rain load, seismic category, etc. Snow load is the most common concern and should be clarified as to ground and roof loads, as these are usually different.
 - **Does the building department allow reductions for roof slope or duration of load?** Steeper roof slopes have a reduction in snow load and snow is considered a short term load and the value may be reduced, however the building departments in some areas do not allow this reduction.

- **What is the frost depth?** In some mountain regions, the frost depth may be up to 9'. You will need to clarify what is the minimum depth of the footings. The building department will have provisions for shallower frost depth and frost-protected footings (insulation next to and out from the footing) or something similar.
- d. **What are the plan submittal requirements?** There will be a minimum or required paper size and a minimum or required scale for drawings. They will generally require 24"x36" paper with a 1/4" = 1' scale. Newer consumption and storage requirements may allow for an 11" x 17" with a 1/8" = 1' scale.
- **How many full sets of plans are required?**
 1. **Architectural Plans:** include floor plans with dimensions and rooms labeled, sections and elevation views.
 2. **Structural Plans:** include foundation, floor, roof and wall framing, structural notes and details.
 3. **The Plot Plan:** An outline of the property with the boundaries dimensioned and labeled for compass direction, building department required setbacks drawn in and labeled, and distances to the property line for the new construction.
 - **Will they require additional copies of any single part of the above plans?**
 - **Is an engineers stamp required on the structural plans?** If the IRC prescribed standards are followed in the area you wish to build, and are clearly labeled on the plans, the structure is considered pre-engineered, and the building department can review the plans and accept them without an engineers stamp. Some building departments require an engineered foundation only, as the soil is the only variable that can't be prescribed for.
3. **Let them know you are building a home with Structural Insulated Panels.** SIPs are listed in the IRC under section R614 in the 2007 Supplement and are considered a mainstream construction method. If the building department does not agree, ask what information they would need to approve a building permit for a SIPs structure. Notify them that Round Foot^o Homes plans are designed using SIPs supplied from manufacturers who adhere to strict manufacturing and testing standards, and the panels themselves can be approved and stamped by an engineer. This can be done either through Round Foot^o Homes, or by your local engineer who can review our calculations which are developed specifically according to local conditions.
4. **Let them know you have additional services available to you through the plans provider (Round Foot^o Homes).**
- a. **Option #1:** Your Round Foot^o Homes plan package, can provide detailed calculations for a wide variety of environmental loading conditions.
 - b. **Option #2:** For those states that our engineer is licensed in (currently 9 states including AZ, CO, CT, ID, KY, MN, NM, PA, and WY) we can provide an engineer's stamp on your plans. We assume certain soil conditions, which may need to be verified by a local engineer or the building department. Some smaller building departments may be satisfied with a licensed experienced out-of-state engineer as opposed to a local, inexperienced engineer – it doesn't hurt to ask.