

DO YOU NEED TO DISPLAY A PERMIT CARD?

By: Robert C. Solera, Code Enforcement Director / CSI President

It is the duty of the Town of Southwest Ranches to ensure that life safety is top priority. Any alteration or repairs under Section 104.1 of the Florida Building Code requires a permit with limited exceptions which also provides with safeguards for the health and safety of our residents. Construction not only affects the owner but also their neighbors. In addition the displaying of a permit card for an approved permit at a property *is a requirement of the code*. The permit card needs to be visible and place in a conspicuous place. This action allows for our inspectors to assure that a permit has been approved, and does protect the property owner from unnecessary issuance of Notices of Violations.

Residents have approached our Department requesting to know if there is access to permit data or permit information. CAP which provides the Building Department Services for the Town has a website named Citizen Serve which allows residents rapid search and instant information based on the type of permit or location. Please contact CAP at (954) 888-9882; contact person Lisa Reices-Nicasio, for instructions, to relay any issues with the system if one is encountered, and for any questions.

When a complaint for failure to obtain a permit is received by our Department, our first step is to verify if a permit was issued by contacting CAP via phone and e-mail. If a permit is not present then a case which results in a Notice of Violation is initiated, and an inspection of the location is performed by our Department. If a permit is active and it is related to the type of work that has been indicated by the complaint, then no action takes place. When the complainant request an update of the action we provide one as it becomes available.

As a reminder our Department is not allowed to initiate complaints or cases related to this type of issues. It requires a complaint either anonymous or not, for an inspection and investigation to take place. ***Our Town is not pro-active but reactive in nature when it relates to Code Enforcement per the request or our Council.***

Generally, a permit is required for the erection or construction of any structure. A permit is also required for the additions, repairs, improvements, alterations, and the extension and covering of a structure. The installation of items on the right of way such as trees, or other structures or decorations which is owned by the Town of Southwest Ranches also requires a permit from the Engineering Department. **If there**

is a question as to the nature of the work to be performed in relation to the permit required please contact our Department, we will guide you in the process and provide you with unlimited resources that are available for your use. Be aware that very few items are exempt from permit requirements.

The Towns' permitting process allows residents to know if the contractor they just hired or intend to hire is a certified professional. Be aware that no governmental agency currently issues "handyman" licenses. State and County issued contractor licenses that are very specific as to the type of work that a professional is authorized to perform and each license provides this information. In fact, it is the property owner's right to request proof of this license

There are warning signs that property owners can identify. An unlicensed person posing as a contractor may be recognized by one or more of the following: requests most of the cost paid upfront or request a large "down payment"; unwilling or unable to give you a written contract; unwilling or unable to show proof of proper licensing or insurance (liability or workmen's comp.); unwilling or unable to obtain a permit or might be hesitant to apply for a permit; might only work after normal business hours (nights and weekends); requests to be paid in cash or, if by check, made payable to a person instead of a business; and might not display their contractor license number on their vehicles, business cards, contracts or advertisements.

The Town of Southwest Ranches and the Code Enforcement Department are here to help and guide you, please call us and we will provide you with valuable information. Our contact number is 954-434-0008, and we are just a phone call away.