CALGARY PLUMBING PRO

Permits, Codes & Safety

Plumbing and gas permits in Calgary and nearby towns, the Alberta plumbing and gas codes, inspections, homeowner permits and safety

4 Expert Answers from Plumbing IQ

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Q1

Plumbing permits for a secondary suite in Calgary, what's required?

Adding a secondary suite in Calgary usually involves new plumbing, which needs a plumbing permit, and any new gas work needs a gas permit as well. The City of Calgary issues both, and the rules around who can pull them matter a great deal here.

What triggers a plumbing permit for a suite

Any new plumbing rough-in, added drain, vent or supply line, or a new bathroom or kitchen connection requires a plumbing permit from the City of Calgary. That covers the typical suite scope: a bathroom, a kitchenette or full kitchen, laundry connections, and any new fixture that ties into the existing drain-waste-vent system. Replacing existing water and sewer lines in or around the home also needs a permit. Installing a backwater valve, which the City of Calgary recommends on the sewer pipe or on basement fixtures, needs a plumbing permit as well.

A homeowner cannot take out a permit for a contractor's work. In Calgary, a homeowner plumbing permit is available only when you own the home, you live in it, and you do the work yourself. A secondary suite built by a contractor requires the contractor to pull the permit in their own name. The City will not issue a homeowner permit for concealed plumbing done without a permit after the fact, so the sequence matters: permit first, then rough-in, then inspection, then cover the walls.

The City requires both a rough-in inspection and a final inspection. At the final, the inspector checks that tub and shower water does not exceed 49°C and that toilets have shut-offs.

Gas work is a separate matter entirely. A homeowner in Calgary cannot obtain a gas permit unless they hold an Alberta journeyman gasfitter certificate. Any gas line to a suite kitchen range, a suite water heater, or a suite furnace must be done by a certified gasfitter under a gas permit. Gasfitter Class B covers the residential equipment common in a suite.

Permit fees for a contractor's trade permit start at $116.50 and increase with construction value: $112 plus $9.79 per $1,000 of construction value, plus the 4% Safety Codes Council levy. Starting work before the permit is issued doubles the fee, and a re-inspection costs $327.

The plumbing work itself must meet the National Plumbing Code of Canada 2020, which has been in force in Alberta since April 1, 2023. Gas installations fall under CSA B149.1:25, in force since March 1, 2026.

Before hiring anyone, ask to see the plumber's trade certificate (plumbing is a compulsory certification trade in Alberta under the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act), a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming the contractor's account is in good standing, and an Alberta prepaid contracting licence from Service Alberta if any

deposit changes hands before the work is complete. Get the scope, permit responsibility, inspection dates, and warranty terms in writing before signing anything.

The one question to put to a plumber before you sign: "Will you be pulling the permit in your name, and can you show me the permit number before the rough-in starts?"

Q2

Replacing a kitchen faucet in Calgary, does it need a permit?

No permit is needed to replace a kitchen faucet in Calgary. Under Alberta's Permit Regulation, swapping out a faucet does not require a permit when the piping itself is not changing, and a like-for-like faucet replacement leaves the supply lines and drain connections in place.

That said, a few things can turn a simple faucet swap into a bigger job worth knowing about before you start.

What can change the scope

If the shut-off valves under the sink are old, corroded or won't close fully, a plumber will likely replace them at the same time. That is still a fixture-level repair with no permit needed. If the supply lines are original copper stubs that need to be cut back or re-routed, the job edges into piping work, and it is worth confirming with the plumber whether a permit applies at that point.

Older homes sometimes have supply lines that are past their useful life. A plumber doing a faucet swap is well positioned to flag anything worth addressing while the water is already off.

What the job should cost

A faucet installation in Calgary typically runs $150 to $500 in labour, depending on access under the sink, whether the shut-offs need replacing and how long the old faucet fights back. If you are supplying the faucet yourself, confirm the plumber is comfortable installing customer-supplied fixtures; some charge a different rate or limit their warranty to labour only. If the plumber supplies the faucet, ask for the model number so you can compare it.

A fair quote for this job should include the labour rate or a fixed price, any shut-off valve replacement, removal of the old faucet, and the warranty on labour. GST (5%) applies to the contractor's work.

DIY note

A homeowner who owns and lives in the home can replace a faucet without a permit, since no permit is required for this work in the first place. Turning off the water at the fixture shut-offs, disconnecting the supply lines and swapping

the faucet is within reach for a confident DIYer. The main risk is a shut-off valve that leaks or fails when turned; if the valves look old or stiff, having a plumber handle it is the safer call.

Before you hire

Ask to see the plumber's trade certificate confirming they are a certified journeyperson or a registered apprentice working under one. If any deposit changes hands before the work is finished, the contractor needs an Alberta prepaid contracting licence (Service Alberta); check that before paying. A WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirms their account is in good standing, which protects you if a premium issue comes up.

The request form on this page puts your job in front of local Calgary plumbers so you can line up a couple of written quotes.

Q3

Is there an extra Airdrie fee when a homeowner does their own plumbing?

Yes. Since January 2026, the City of Airdrie charges an additional $100 fee per trade when a homeowner takes out their own trade permit. That surcharge applies on top of the standard permit fee, and it does not apply when you hire a contractor to do the work.

The $100 per-trade surcharge is the key number to build into your budget before you start.

A few other Airdrie rules worth knowing alongside that fee. Homeowner permits are available only for a home you own and live in; you cannot use a homeowner permit for any part of a rental property. The City of Airdrie lists plumbing, hot water tanks, gas work, furnaces and fireplaces among the work that requires permits, so most meaningful plumbing projects will trigger the permit requirement and, if you are doing the work yourself, the surcharge.

What this means for your project

The total permit cost depends on the scope of the work, and the City of Airdrie sets its own fee schedule. Contact the City directly to get the current base permit fee for your specific job, then add the $100 homeowner surcharge on top of that to arrive at your true permit cost.

If you are weighing doing the work yourself against hiring a plumber, factor in not just the surcharge but also the time, tools and skill the job requires. A homeowner plumbing permit is a legitimate option for straightforward work in a home you occupy, but concealed piping, drain venting and sewer connections are genuinely technical and an inspection will catch anything that does not meet the National Plumbing Code of Canada 2020.

Before hiring a plumber for any Airdrie job, ask to see their trade certificate (plumbing is a compulsory certification trade in Alberta under the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act), a WCB-Alberta clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing, and their Alberta prepaid contracting licence if they are collecting any deposit before the work is finished. Get the contract in writing before any money changes hands.

When you have two written quotes in front of you, line up the permit fee and who is responsible for pulling it, the equipment or materials specified by model or type, whether wall or floor patching is included, the warranty terms on both parts and labour, and the payment schedule against the completion date.

Q4

Which plumbing jobs need a permit in Calgary?

Most plumbing work in Calgary requires a permit from the City of Calgary, but the list of exemptions is longer than many homeowners expect, and knowing where the line falls can save you time and money before you call a plumber.

What needs a permit

The Alberta Permit Regulation requires a permit to install, alter or add to a plumbing system. In Calgary that covers:

- Replacing water or sewer lines in or around the home
- Installing a backwater valve
- Installing a testable cross-connection control device (these are also tested yearly by a tester registered with the City)
- Any new rough-in work, such as a basement bathroom
- Adding or relocating drain, waste or vent piping

  For gas, a permit is required to install, alter or add to a gas system. In Calgary, a homeowner cannot take out a gas permit unless they hold an Alberta journeyman gasfitter certificate; all other gas work must be permitted and done by a certified gasfitter.

  Water heaters sit in a middle ground. A straight like-for-like swap of a tank water heater needs no permit. A permit is required when the gas line upstream of the heater's shut-off valve changes, when the venting changes, or when the type of heater changes, for example swapping a natural draft unit for a direct vent or tankless model.

  What does NOT need a permit.

  The Alberta Permit Regulation (not a City rule) exempts certain work from the permit requirement:

- Changing a fixture, faucet, trap or valve when the piping itself does not change
- Installing fixtures in a single-family home when the rough-in was done under a separate permit
- Installing a residential water treatment device in a single-family home

Clearing a blocked drain, replacing a toilet flapper, or swapping out a showerhead fall into the same no-permit category, as long as no piping is altered.

Homeowner permits in Calgary.

A homeowner who owns the home, lives in it (or intends to), and does the work themselves may apply for a plumbing permit for any plumbing job. The City will not issue a homeowner permit for concealed plumbing that was done without a permit, and a homeowner permit cannot be used to cover a contractor's work. The 2026 fee for a homeowner plumbing permit is $116.50, which includes the Safety Codes Council levy. Starting work before the permit is issued doubles the fee, and a re-inspection costs $327.

What the inspection covers.

The City requires a rough-in inspection and a final inspection. At the final, the inspector checks that tub and shower water does not exceed 49°C and that toilets have individual shut-offs.

Before you start.

If you are unsure whether your specific job needs a permit, the City of Calgary is the right first call, not a plumber, because the permit obligation sits with the permit authority. If the work involves a water heater change or any gas connection, confirm the venting and gas line details with a certified gasfitter before assuming no permit is needed; the exemption disappears the moment any upstream gas piping or venting changes. Checking with the City first costs nothing and protects you if the work ever comes up on a home sale or insurance claim.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Calgary Plumbing Pro. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority (the City of Calgary or your own municipality) before starting any plumbing or gas project. Information is current as of November 15, 2026 and may change. Visit **calgaryplumbingpro.com** for the latest answers.