



# Flood Damage Bulletin # 56

Department of Planning and Land Services, June 2007  
Division of Building Safety and Inspection for 2006 I Codes

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## Permitting Flood-Damaged Buildings

### **Mobile – Manufactured Homes. What is needed in order to obtain a building permit?**

A. The permit to work on the manufactured home comes from the State department of Labor and Industries. Main line: 1-800-LISTENS **1-800-547-8367**  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/FAS/Types/Mobile/Alterations.asp>

B. For a permit to place a manufactured home on a lot , or to reinstall after a flood in unincorporated Pierce County you need a permit from Pierce County.

C. After a structure has been damaged by a flood and before you can apply for a permit you need two pieces of information. First, are you in a "Flood Plain" or a "Flood Way"? Second, has the structure been "substantially damaged"?

The Building Official is responsible for determining "Substantial Damage". FEMA provides software and workbooks that take much of the guess work out of the process. Pierce County Code Title 18E.20 defines it this way:

**Pierce County Code 18E.20.070 B. Substantial Damage.** A structure is considered substantially damaged when the current permit valuation for the work of reconstructing or restoring a structure to its before damage condition exceeds 40 percent of the current permit valuation of the existing structure. 1. Damage to a structure may be sustained through any origin such as but not limited to earthquakes, fire, explosion, flood, landslides, or other calamity. 2. The Building Official shall determine the current permit valuation based on the cost per square foot values in effect at the time of permit application.

#### **18E.20.070 Substantial Improvement and Substantial Damage.**

A. **Substantial Improvement.** Substantial improvement is the repair, reconstruction, addition, rehabilitation, or other improvement of a structure taking place during a period of 10 years, the cumulative cost of which equals or whereby the current permit valuation for the work exceeds 40 percent of the current permit valuation of the existing structure.

1. The Building Official shall determine the current permit valuation based on the cost per square foot values in effect at the time of permit application.

2. Substantial improvement is considered to occur when the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor, or other structural part of the building commences, whether or not that alteration affects the external dimensions of the structure. Substantial improvement does not, however, include either:

a. Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of State or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions; or

b. Any alteration of a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places or a State Inventory of Historic Places.

1. **In a "Flood Way" AND "Substantially Damaged"**. Property may NOT be repaired.

2. **In a "Flood Way" AND NOT "Substantially Damaged"**. Property may be repaired but must meet ALL the regulations to do so. This may mean elevating the structure and access road and providing compensatory storage for the added fill. If a structure in the Floodway has less than 40% damage (or improvements) work can be done on the structure as long as it does not increase the footprint of the building. So elevation, interior work and second story additions can be done so long as the 40% valuation limit isn't crossed. Once crossed return to Point 1 and there is no repairs/rebuilding allowed.

3. **In a "Flood Plain" AND "Substantially Damaged"**. If more than 40% of improvement is done then it may be repaired but must meet ALL the regulations to do so. This may mean elevating the structure and access road and providing compensatory storage for the added fill.

4. **In a "Flood Plain" AND NOT "Substantially Damaged"**. Property may be repaired up to the 40% limit. If more than 40% of improvement is done then it may be repaired but must meet ALL the regulations to do so. This may mean elevating the structure and access road and providing compensatory storage for the added fill.

**Question 2** Is there a difference between a stick built home vs mobile home in obtaining a building permit?

The only difference is the requirement for a L&I permit for repairing the manufactured home. For site built homes we would issue the repair permit. L&I would only issue an electrical permit.

**NOTE:** the 40% improvement and or repair is cumulative over a ten year period.