

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT PERMITTING FOR PERGOLAS AND PAVILIONS



Most of our pergola and pavilion orders go out without any mention of permits from our customers. In many municipalities, shade structures under 200 square ft that do not have electricity or plumbing do not require a permit. Some require a permit once you exceed 120 square ft.

As the structure gets larger or has electricity or plumbing, depending on where you are located, the odds of needing a permit increase.

Some Homeowners Associations require prior approval and adherence to development rules.

If you plan to secure a permit before proceeding:

Municipalities vary from easy to work with to detailed and bureaucratic. Country properties are normally easier to secure approval than city properties. If you are concerned about running afoul of local ordinances, we recommend that you contact your permitting office and show them a picture of the structure you are planning to put up. Let them know the size and where you are planning to install it in your yard. Here is how:

To show them where it will be installed will take you about 5 minutes to prepare. Just print out a photo of your property from overhead from Google Maps. Then draw a square or rectangle roughly where you are planning to place the pergola in your yard and as close to scale as you can. Make sure to stay away from the property line because most counties do not allow you to build anything within 5 or 10 ft of your neighbor's property without a waiver or a permit. Choose a photo from our website that is as close to the size you want as possible and print it out. With this "site map" and photo of the structure, you can get their feedback and then let us know what they require.

For most structures under 200 square ft in most localities, odds are you will get a green light with minimal requirements and costs with just a site map and product information and size.

In some cases, you will be asked to submit a final design drawing and information on how you plan to anchor it to the ground and nothing more to proceed.

Some counties are unfortunately demanding. In these circumstances, here is the steps we normally follow:

If after your initial visit they tell you that you will need structural calculations or other requirements, we can help you with all the documentation in almost all cases.

If you are in a county that requires a lot of documentation to secure your permit, we recommend you place a preliminary order with us via phone with just a \$2,000. Design Deposit. The design work is included in all of our Pergola and Pavilion projects at no charge, but we must secure a deposit in order to proceed because it is a time consuming process to prepare detailed drawings and go back and forth with you as needed to fine tune all details. The Structural Calculations package is prepared after your design is approved by our Los Angeles based Structural Engineer and the cost for this comprehensive package is \$500. This is the only additional charge to your shade structure order that is added to your preliminary order. The design and engineering deposit of \$2,000. is non-refundable, but it will be deducted from your order total once you have your permit and are ready to move forward.

As soon as we receive your order, we will begin by preparing drawings for your review via email. Once we have the structure just the way you want it, we will then send your approved drawing to our Structural Engineer to prepare a complete structural calculations package that will go along with your approved design so that you can secure your permit.

The structural calculations package adds a couple of weeks to your design time. It is over 30 pages and is prepared by a California based structural Engineer and has a wet stamp signature. It covers structural, wind, snow load and other calculations. If you are in a heavy snow load area or a hurricane area or a seismically active area, with your installation address, the Structural Calculations will be tailored to meet your local conditions and requirements. It is both emailed to you and also a printed copy of sent U.S. mail. With this package, your approved drawings and your initial Site Map, you can pull a permit.

Worse case scenario: Some counties insist on a wet stamp signature from an Engineer in the state you are in. We cannot help with this, but with our California based Structural Calculations report, the few customers that have had to get a local Engineer after the fact say that it almost always costs only \$500 to \$750 for the additional cost of having a local in-state Engineer to review what is already done by the California engineer and to add his/her stamped wet signature to the plans.

All anchoring information for your order will be detailed in your design plans and also covered in the structural calculations. If this question comes up in the initial visit, for almost all pergolas, if you already have a standard concrete pad where it will be installed, that is all you need. If the area does not, then you will need to dig footings that are at least 12" in diameter and at least 30" deep for the anchors. For more on anchoring your pergola or pavilion, please see the links below:

#### [ANCHORING OPTIONS](#)

Sounds a bit complicated but we are here to help. The initial contact is simple as outlined above and most counties are reasonable, but if in doubt, it is a good idea to follow the steps above before proceeding. Once you know what you need, we are here to support you each step of the way including even coming out and installing the structure if you do not have anyone to help with it.

Call, chat or email anytime if any of this is unclear.