

An owner of a vacant building located in the City of Houston shall obtain a permit to secure the building to prevent unauthorized entry as required by Chapter 10, Section 10-382 of the *City Code*. Buildings shall receive sufficient maintenance to ensure that they do not constitute a public health and safety hazard, or nuisance to the community as required by Chapter 10 of the *City Code*.

### PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

An owner may comply with a notice or an order to secure a dangerous building by obtaining a permit and securing the building to meet city specifications or by obtaining a repair permit to replace windows and doors with locks. A separate permit is required for each vacant building. Permits are effective for a period of one year from the date of their issuance. The permit must be renewed at least 30 days prior to its expiration date.

A permit to secure a vacant building can be purchased at the Houston Permitting Center located at 1002 Washington Avenue Floor 1, Houston, Texas 77002. The cost of the permit is \$251.62 each. There is an administrative fee of \$33.10. The methods accepted for payment are Cash and Credit Card. Personal Checks are not accepted.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Once the permit is purchased, the following must be done to secure the building:

- A. All exterior openings, including but not limited to windows, doors, and fixed glass walls shall be barricaded in such a manner as to ensure a positive system against ingress.
- B. Every person owning or in charge of or control of any vacant building shall remove all accumulations of waste, rubbish, trash, flammable or combustible materials from the building prior to securing.
- C. When repairs are being made, all doors used as a means of entry shall have dead bolt locks keyed from both sides. At all other times, all doors, including means of entry shall be barricaded.
- D. Barrier/barricade facing material shall not be less than ½” rough or sanded, plywood structure exterior grade CD as follows:
  1. Single ½” thick sheet for spans (the smaller measured distance between parallel edge supports of the two possible perpendicular support conditions) up to and including 4’ 6”.
  2. Single ½” thick sheet glued together and attached with 1 and 1/8” long 6-gage (138” diameter) wood screws spaced not more than 18” on center in each direction for spans 4’7” up to and including 7’6”.
  3. For spans more than 7’6” shall be engineered by an engineer licensed to practice in the State of Texas.
- E. Attachment of barrier material to the building shall not be less than the following:
  1. One quarter inch (¼”) diameter lag bolts spaced not more than twelve inches (12”) on the center around opening. Pilot of lead holes 5/32” diameter shall be used on the placement of all lag bolts. Minimum length of the lag bolt shall be three inches (3”) and minimum penetration into the wood studs at jambs, and double 2X’s at heads into the wood studs at jambs, and double 2X’s at heads and sills of openings shall be 1 and ½”. Lag bolts shall have steel washers placed between plywood and lag bolt head. Lag bolts shall be placed from the inside structure and drawn up tight against interior face.

2. Three-inch (3") long drywall (sheetrock) screws placed not more than six inches (6") on center around opening may be used in lieu of lag bolts. These screws should be placed with battery powered screwdrivers. The flathead of the screw shall be even with plywood face or countersunk.
- F. Exposed joints between the plywood sheets of the barrier/barricade facing material shall be reinforced with a 2 x 6 laid flat against and centered on the exposed joint line. Two-inch (2") long, six-gage, wood screws shall be placed on each side of the joint at not more than six inches (6") on the center. There shall be not more than one interior joint in any eight-foot (8') section.
- G. Plywood edge at the floor joint (door opening barrier location [see 10-03-R-A]) shall be reinforced with a 2 x 4 laid flat against the plywood and attached to plywood with six-gage, two inch (2") long screws six inches (6") on center.
- H. Joints are not permitted in plywood perpendicular to the direction of the span.
- I. Barriers on all exterior openings shall provide solid covering without large cracks, slots, holes and/or block outs.
1. Refer to Drawings 25-06-R and 25-07-R for the general description of basic wall framing for wood frame door and window openings.
  2. Refer to Drawings 25-10-R and 25-11-R for examples of a barrier placed on the outside wall face. This method may be more appropriate for masonry wall construction.
  3. Refer to Drawings 25-08-R and 25-09-R are examples of barriers acceptable to the Building Official. Other methods may satisfy the design criteria and intent described below and is acceptable if approved by the Building Official.

### **Design Criteria**

- a. Minimum uniform load of thirty-five pounds per square foot live load on barrier facing material between supports at openings. The minimum point concentration load of 250 lbs. applied at any point in the opening to be protected.
- b. Minimum 350 lbs. concentrated load applied midway between the attachment devices to be placed along each side or the edge.
- c. Minimum 350 lbs. resistance for each group/single attachment device location.
- d. The attachment device shall be either lag bolts or screws placed from the inside or carriage bolts with bolt heads positioned on the outside of the structure.
- e. The load duration factor of 1.33 is allowed for all materials and attachment devices. Wet or dry conditions of use shall be as specified in the code. The design intent is to provide a barrier that will support a nominal uniform load. Edges of barrier material shall be sufficiently strong to protect against prying action. Attachment devices shall not be available for dismantle or manipulation from the exterior of the building.