

**Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES)**

900 Oakesdale Avenue Southwest • Renton, Washington 98057-5212 • 206-296-6600 • TTY 206-296-7217

# Obtaining A Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit

DDES Customer  
Information Bulletin #**50****• FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •**

*Visit the DDES Web site at  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)  
for more information*

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

For alternate formats, call 206-296-6600.

## Introduction

The Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit Program is a convenient system of booklets, forms and drawings which address the seismic retrofitting of existing homes with weak pony walls and unbolted sill plates. The purpose of this retrofit is to help safeguard against major structural failures due to earthquakes. This bulletin serves as a guideline to help customers understand the process for obtaining this permit.

In general, the homes must be of wood-frame construction with a light weight roof, not irregularly shaped, with a reinforced concrete foundation, up to two stories in height and on a relatively level lot. For more detailed information, consult the three booklets produced as part of the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series. These booklets: Booklet 1, *Overview*; Booklet 2, *Guide to Completing the Home Assessment Checklist* and Booklet 3, *Guide to Completing a Home Earthquake Retrofit Plan for Wood Framed Residential Buildings* along with the *Standard Home Retrofit Plan Set*, drawings S1 and S2, are available from the DDES Permit Center for a nominal fee. Additional information is also available via the King County Project Impact – **Emergency Coordination Center Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/prepare](http://www.kingcounty.gov/prepare).**

Homes that do not meet the prescribed structural criteria for this program, or that are located in a flood plain, are still candidates for seismic retrofitting. However, an architect, surveyor or structural engineer will need to develop specific plans, and DDES will need more time to review these more unique situations. Please reference DDES Bulletin 9 and Bulletin 12 regarding permit requirements and processes.

Proposed projects will be checked for compliance with the International Residential or Building Code, Washington State Energy Code (if basement areas are heated) and other ordinances and policies adopted by King County and/or Washington State.

**Application requirements**

To obtain a Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit, customers must provide the King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) with the following:

- A. Affidavit for Application form
- B. Property tax account number
- C. Hazard assessment checklist
- D. Standard home earthquake retrofit plan set
- E. Valuation for retrofit scope of work
- F. Contractor's registration number/Owner affidavit.

Review of an application will not begin until customers have submitted all the materials specified for a complete application.

**A. Affidavit for Application form**

The Affidavit of Application establishes the scope of work, the property owner, and/or the agent, as well as Critical Areas compliance. Please be sure to bring the owner's name, address, and telephone number and the applicant's name, address, and telephone number (if different from that of the owner). This information is required if it is necessary to contact someone to answer additional questions that arise during the application process. The address is used also to notify the owner by mail that the permit is ready for pickup.

**B. Property tax account number**

This is an identifying number assigned by the Assessor's Office. DDES uses this number to verify that property taxes are paid. **Permits will not be issued unless taxes are current.**

**C. Hazard assessment checklist**

The Hazard Assessment Checklist, found in the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series Booklets 2 and 3, is used to determine if a house qualifies to use the standard reference details and if earthquake retrofit work is required. Booklet 2 contains a guide to completing the checklist. This checklist is also available separately at the DDES Permit Center. The checklist must be completed and submitted to DDES, along with the plan sets.

**D. Standard home earthquake retrofit plan set**

After completing the Hazard Assessment Checklist and determining that a house qualifies for this program, customers must complete sheets S1 and S2 of the Plan Set. Booklet 3, of the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series, contains a guide to completing the Plan Set according to the minimum requirements. Sheet S1 provides a grid to create a scaled outline (scale: 1/4" = 1' - 0" preferred, 1/8" = 1' - 0" allowed) of a house foundation. Customers may view and/or print a sample of the Standard Home Retrofit Plan Set drawings S1 and S2 (44" x 36") at [www.metrokc.gov/ddes/acrobat/cib/50\\_app\\_a.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/acrobat/cib/50_app_a.pdf) (1.7MB).

Please designate the use of each room or space (e.g. storage, garage, etc.) and indicate the square footage of any conditioned space. Once applicants have completed this outline, they then select retrofit solutions from sheet S2. The solutions vary depending on the specific construction of a home. Once these two sheets are complete, two sets are required: one for the field and one for DDES records. These sets are required to be legible reproductions (no pencil drawings) on substantial paper.

If a proposed retrofit deviates from the standard conditions, DDES may require additional drawing, details, sections or stamped engineered calculations and/or details for any building site. If customers are planning to retrofit a log house, pole building, metal, masonry, or concrete structure, calculations and plans stamped by a licensed Engineer will likely be required and may not qualify for this program.

#### **E. Retrofit scope of work**

The applicant is to provide a dollar value for the cost of materials and labor for the retrofit scope of work.

#### **F. Contractor's registration number/owner affidavit**

Contractors must be registered with the State per State law. When choosing a Contractor, please refer to *Bulletin 6, Working with Contractors*. An owner can be an Owner-Contractor when building on his or her own property subject to completing a notarized affidavit. Owner Affidavit Forms are available upon request.

### **Permit process**

**Pre-review:** To initiate the permit process first contact our seismic home retrofit specialists at 206-296-6600. The review specialist can discuss the program requirements, limitations and available resources. You may also meet with the review specialist prior to permit application submittal to ensure the package complies with the home retrofit program.

**Permit application:** Your application is made in person at our DDES office in Renton. As directed by the seismic home retrofit specialist, you may meet with the reviewer first or be directed to apply directly for the permit. After initial screening, most of these permits may be issued over-the-counter. Following review your plan set will be stamped approved and you will receive a formal building permit. The permit is valid for one year; however an additional one year extension may be approved.

**Building inspections:** Building department staff will visit your home twice to inspect the retrofit work. Generally one inspection will be completed after the anchor bolts are installed and one inspection after the pony wall bracing is installed. The contractor, or you as homeowner if you are doing the work yourself, is responsible to call your inspector when you are ready for these inspections. Inspection will focus on work related to the earthquake retrofit project.

Inspections may be scheduled 24 hours a day, 7 days per week either:

- Online at <http://inspections.metrokc.gov>
- By phone at 1-888-5-INSPCT (1-888-546-7728).

For more information about DDES building inspections, visit [www.metrokc.gov/permits/info/inspections.aspx](http://www.metrokc.gov/permits/info/inspections.aspx).

**Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful**

Customer information bulletins are available on the Department's web site at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits>. If Web access is unavailable, customers may call the DDES Permit Center at 206-296-6600 to request information by mail.

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 3	Demolition Permits
Bulletin 4	Damage Repairs
Bulletin 6	Working with Contractors
Bulletin 9	Obtaining a Residential Building Permit
Bulletin 10	Residential Building On or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 12	Residential Building Permit Process
Bulletin 21	Critical Areas Review

These and other DDES bulletins are available via the department Web site at [www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits).

206-296-6600	DDES customer service
206-296-6797	DDES permit center appointment desk

**Also Available:**

Energy Code Compliance Forms  
 Residential Correction Sheets  
 Prescriptive Design Method for Lateral Design  
 King County Rockery Requirements

**Additional Resources:**

*City of Seattle's Project Impact Web site –*  
<http://www.seattle.gov/emergency/programs/projectimpact/retrofit.htm>

*King County's Emergency Services, Earthquake information Web site -*  
<http://www.metrokc.gov/prepare/preparerespond/hazardsdisasters/earthquakes.aspx>



**Be sure to visit our Web site at:**  
[www.kingcounty.gov/permits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/permits)

King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6600 or TTY 206-296-7217.