

BELIZE:

BELIZE BUILDING REGULATIONS, 2022

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BELIZE:**STATUTORY INSTRUMENT****No. 157 of 2022**

REGULATIONS made by the Central Building Authority after consultation with the local authorities, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by sections 9(3), 20(4) and 37 of the Belize Building Act, Chapter 131 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2020, and all other powers thereunto it enabling.

(Gazetted 2nd December, 2022).

1. These Regulations may be cited as the

Citation.

BELIZE BUILDING REGULATIONS, 2022,

2. In these Regulations—

Interpretation.

“agricultural purposes” in relation to land, means land that is used for cultivating, propagating, harvesting, exhibiting, marketing, transporting, etc. of any plant or animal, including for animal husbandry, on land that is used primarily for such purposes;

“commercial purposes” means a building that is used for commercial activities, such as retail, the providing of services, including food services (restaurants and the like), generally having the potential for being one that brings in income;

“conventional bungalow” means a structure built for residential purposes that is non-complex;

“furthest projection” in relation to a building, means any roof, overhang, veranda, stairs, attached walkway, or other part of a building that is attached to the building, that extends beyond the walls of building;

“non-complex” in relation to a conventional bungalow, means a structure that is not elevated, does not have a concrete roof, and includes a basic hip or gable roof, that has spans of less than 20 feet;

“project number” means the unique number assigned to a project by the Authority or a Building Unit; and

“square feet” or “sq. ft.” means the aggregate number of square feet of the vacant space measured from the front exterior surface to the rear exterior surface and from the middle of demising walls of such vacant space, of any structure on a property, and is not limited to habitable spaces, and is generally inclined towards the building footprint.

**Qualifications
of Technical
Manager.**

3. The qualifications required to be eligible as Technical Manager shall include, a person who is–

- (a) an architect or a civil or structural engineer;
- (b) knowledgeable of the building and construction sector and able to apply himself professionally in accordance with the Act, or any building codes deemed relevant by the Authority; and
- (c) knowledgeable of, and able to, collaborate with all regulatory bodies and permitting agencies that govern and regulate building works in Belize.

**Duties of
Technical
Manager.**

4. In addition to the duties outlined under the Act, the duties of the Technical Manager shall include, but not be limited to–

- (a) supervising Building Inspectors and other employees of the Building Unit.
- (b) reviewing reports produced by a Building Inspector; or

- (c) responding to applications submitted under the Act within fourteen business days of submission of the application.

5. The Authority may, before approving any building plans, request calculations and specifications for designs, including for, but not limited to—

Request for calculations and specifications.

- (a) water tanks, cisterns, antennas or pools; or
- (b) fences in relation to new buildings;

6.—(1) Where an application for a permit is approved, the permit shall be issued to the applicant along with the following—

Issue of permit.

- (a) a letter of no objection to the proposed development along with an application to commence building works;
- (b) a notice of commencement of work; and
- (c) approved plans for the building.

(2) An owner who receives a letter of no objection, under sub-regulation (1), shall complete the notice and submit it to the Authority or the Technical Manager as appropriate, within one year of the date of receipt of the notice.

7.—(1) Any building plans submitted with an application shall comply with the following requirements for form—

Form of building plans.

- (a) be in English and not less than font size 12;
- (b) be prepared in either imperial or metric units, but not a combination of both;
- (c) include detailed, properly labelled and dimensioned floor plans;

- (d) contain the relevant elevations for each face of the building;
- (e) contain a minimum of two cross sections of the building that are perpendicular to each other, illustrating–
 - (i) the building from roof to foundation;
 - (ii) identifying each cross-section on the floor plan of the building; and
 - (iii) illustrating the more difficult aspects of the building; or
- (f) illustrate the –
 - (i) foundation layout and details of the foundation of the building;
 - (ii) architectural and structural details of the staircases included in the building;
 - (iii) roof plan and roof framing plan, floor framing plan, showing beam layout and floor reinforcement;
 - (iv) wall details, and wall intersection details;
 - (v) column layout and details;
 - (vi) beam layout and details;
 - (vii) window schedules;
 - (viii) door schedules;
 - (ix) plumbing plans, including all water supply and waste disposal systems;

- (x) details of the septic tank, soak away or leach field that are either the pre-approved sewage disposal system or approved system from the Ministry responsible for health or Department of the Environment;
- (xi) site plan, illustrating the setbacks on all sides of the building for all features or parts of the building;
- (xii) location of the sewage systems being at least ten feet from the boundary line of any property, and at least fifty feet from any open water source; and
- (xiii) location plan, clearly identifying the location of the property in reference to any easily identifiable landmarks.

(2) For the purpose of paragraph (f) (xiii), in any case where a ten feet setback is determined to be impractical, an alternative system may be utilized, after thorough review and approval by the Ministry responsible for health or Department of the Environment.

8.-(1) An application for the construction of a building that is for one or a combination of the following purposes—

Building use.

- (a) agricultural purposes;
- (b) industrial purposes;
- (c) commercial purposes;
- (d) residential purposes;
- (e) institutional purposes; or

- (f) other use not within the categories mentioned under sub-regulation (a) to (e) above,

shall be in conformity with the relevant criterion specified under in this regulation.

(2) Where an application is in relation to a building for agricultural purposes, the application shall include—

- (a) any relevant clearance letters from the Ministry responsible for agriculture, endorsing the project as an agricultural project, the Department of the Environment, and Ministry responsible for health, where applicable; or
- (b) where applicable, an assessment of the area designated for parking in relation to the square footage of the building at a minimum of one standard parking space per five hundred square feet of habitable area of the building, including offices, sleeping quarters, working spaces, etc.

(3) Where an application in relation to a building for industrial purposes, the application shall include, where applicable, an assessment of the area designated for parking in relation to the square footage of the building at a minimum of one standard parking space per five hundred square feet of habitable area of the building, including offices, sleeping quarters, working spaces, etc.

(4) Where an application is in relation to a building for commercial purposes, the application shall include where applicable, an assessment of the area designated for parking in relation to the square footage of the building at a minimum of one standard parking space per five hundred square feet of habitable area of the building, including offices, sleeping quarters, working spaces, etc.

(5) Where an application is in relation to an advertisement of a permanent nature to be erected on a road, easement or area marked as a road reserve by the Ministry responsible for works, the application shall include proof of rental or lease of the road, easement or area marked as a road reserve, together with proof of payment from the Ministry responsible for works, or its designated Authority.

(6) Where an application is in relation to a fence for a new building–

- (a) the design of the fence shall be reviewed based on Chapter 6 of International Residential Code; or
- (b) retaining walls or complex designs, the Authority–
 - (i) shall review the plans for structural integrity, in accordance with the International Building Code; and
 - (ii) may require the endorsement of the plans by a registered civil or structural engineer.

(7) Where an application is in relation to a structure which houses an antenna, tower, or similar structure the Authority may request –

- (a) information regarding material type, or any substantiating documents, depending on the complexity of the project or structure.
- (b) clearance letters or permits from the Belize Broadcasting Corporation, Ministry responsible for Civil Aviation, and Public Utilities Commission; or

- (c) depending on the location or sensitivity of the project, that the applicant obtain special permission from a governing Ministry before proceeding.

(8) Where an application is in relation to a pool, spa, deck, patio, cistern, or similar structure the Authority may request –

- (a) information regarding material type, or any substantiating documents, depending on the complexity of the project or structure; or
- (b) structural calculations where the information under paragraph (a), does not adequately address specific loadings and pressures on the pool, spa, deck, patio, cistern, or similar structure.

Timeline for review of application.

9. Where an application for a permit is made, the Authority shall in relation to a fence for a new building, refuse the application or issue a permit within ten business days of receipt of the application.

General site and setback requirements.

10.–(1) An owner shall cause a building to be constructed that ensures that the distance between the farthest projection of any part of the building and the boundary line, shall be not less than four feet.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1), the Authority may–

- (a) enforce the requirements for setback during any stage of construction, where the Authority determines that the construction is contrary to the requirements under these Regulations; or
- (b) ensure compliance with any other setback requirements in relation to septic systems and soak aways as specified under the Privy Accommodation By-Laws.

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(3) On every site in relation to the construction of a new building, alteration, renovation or demolition, the owner shall cause to be displayed on the construction site, a sign, indicating the project number as stated on the letter of no objection that was issued along with the permit and–

- (a) install the sign at the entrance to the site; and
- (b) make the sign of such a size that it is clearly visible from at least eight feet beyond the property line.

(4) On every site in relation to the construction of a new building, or renovation of a building, the owner shall ensure that a copy of the approved plans are presented to the Authority upon demand.

(5) For the purpose of this Part “sign” means a display on which the characters are clearly visible, legibly printed and not less than eight inches in height and one inch in width.

11.-(1) A Stop Order may be issued after the issue of a ticket issued under the circumstances outlined under this Regulation.

Stop Order.

- (2) A ticket issued under this Regulation, shall–
- (a) on the first issue, be a fine of, two hundred and fifty dollars;
 - (b) on the second issue, in relation to the same project, be a fine of five hundred dollars; or
 - (c) in relation to a violation in San Pedro, Caye Caulker, or other cayes or Belizean islands, include, any additional fee as follows–
 - (i) for the cost of the airfare and accommodation for two Building Inspectors; and

- (ii) any other reasonable expenses reasonably incurred in relation to the violation; or(d) on the third or subsequent issue of a ticket, in relation to the same project, a fine of one thousand dollars, and the issue of a Stop Order.

(3) A person who is issued a ticket issued under this Regulation shall pay the fine within ten days of the date of issue of the ticket.

(4) A person who fails to comply pay a ticket within the relevant time period, shall be issued a Stop Order in accordance with the Act.

(5) Where a person to whom a Stop Order is issued under sub-section (3), fails to take appropriate steps to ensure the cessation of the activity to which the Stop Order relates, he commits an offence and is liable in accordance with the Act.

Occupancy permit.

12.–(1) An occupancy permit may be issued for the following–

- (a) an existing building that was built prior to the commencement of the Belize Building Act and without a building permit;
- (b) an existing building for which an application for a change of use of a building is made; or
- (c) a building that was completed within the relevant time period stated in the permit for completion.

(2) In relation to an occupancy permit for a building under sub-regulations (1)(a) and (b) the owner may be required to provide–

- (a) an electrical design approved by the Public Utilities Commission;

- (b) an inspection report from a civil or structural engineer;
- (c) a clearance letter from the Fire Chief of the Belize National Fire service;
- (d) structural and architectural details of the building; or
- (e) depending on the use of the structure, clearance letters from the Department of the Environment, and the Health Department for waste disposal or any other relevant Ministry of Government Agency.

(3) In relation to an occupancy permit for a building under sub-regulation (1)(c) the building may be—

- (a) subject to an inspection to ensure that—
 - (i) the electrical, plumbing and other works are completed in accordance with the relevant requirements;
 - (ii) are completed in accordance with the approved plans; and
 - (iii) the building is determined to be safe for use or occupancy; or
- (b) any relevant fees have been paid.

(4) Where, prior to the issue of an occupancy permit, it is determined that further works are required on the building, the inspector may require further inspections to verify the relevant works are completed before the issue of an occupancy permit.

SCHEDULE

Form of specifications re application for building permit.

[Section 13]

In addition to the requirements outlined under the Act, an applicant shall provide the following—

1. a valid copy of a Belize social security card or passport
2. proof of payment of application fee
3. proof of authority to construct, erect or demolish a building, or carry out any building works on the relevant land, in the approved form
4. clearance letters from any relevant Authority, Ministry or Government Department where applicable
5. a fire, emergency or evacuation plan for public buildings, including but not limited to evacuation route, emergency lights, or fire extinguishers, etc.
6. any handwritten drawings, notes or other information included in an application, presented digitally and in a format that can be easily read and understood
7. three copies of any drawings, notes or other information included in the application that are in print form, of not less than tabloid sized 11”x17”, and clearly interpreted in a digital format
8. drawings that are stamped and signed by an architect, engineer, or a technician
9. an electrical design approved by the Public Utilities Commission
10. where an application is in relation to a building that is less than one thousand and two hundred square feet—
 - (a) drawings that are at a minimum, stamped and signed by a technician, an Associate or Student Member registered under the Professional Architects (Registration) Act or the Professional Engineers (Registration) Act; or
 - (b) be in conformity with any building codes deemed relevant by the Authority;
11. the plans submitted with the application may be endorsed by a technician only where the application is in relation a conventional bungalow
12. where a building is between one thousand and two hundred

square feet and three thousand square feet and two stories high or less, the plans and specifications shall be prepared, designed and certified by an architect or Civil or Structural engineer;

13. where a building is—

- (a) a public building;
- (b) over three thousand square feet; or
- (c) more than two floors high,

the plans and specifications shall be prepared, designed, and certified by an architect and a Civil or Structural engineer;

14. where a building is –

- (a) more than two floors high; or
- (b) more than thirty feet or 9.14 meters high,

verification, via structural calculations, of structural adequacy.

15. where the application is in relation to a steel structure—

- (a) adequate connection details, for all elements of the building;
- (b) structural calculations, to verify adequacy of the structure against natural disasters as may be applicable depending on the location of the property; and
- (c) endorsement of the plan, by a civil or structural engineer.

For the purposes of these Regulations, “height” in relation to a structure, means the height of the building taken from the visible ground, unless the structure includes a basement or cellar, in which case the height will be taken from the basement or cellar.

Every application made to the Authority, may be reviewed by the Director or Technical Manager on no more than two occasions, before the decision to refuse or approve the application is made.

An application that is returned on a third occasion and is not approved shall be subject to the payment of a fee equivalent to the application fee, for the continuation of the application process.

MADE by the Minister responsible for Central Building Authority after consultation with the Authority this 2nd day of December, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julius Espat', with several vertical lines drawn through it.

(HON. JULIUS ESPAT)

Minister of Infrastructure, Development and Housing
(Minister responsible for Central Building Authority)