

# DSD Info Series

A graphic consisting of several orange dots of varying sizes arranged in a pattern that suggests a cluster or a network.

## Permit Like a Pro

A DIY Session on Homeowner  
Eligibility to Homestead Permits



**Development**  
CITY OF AUSTIN  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT



# Format for Today's Session



- Presentation followed by question-and-answer session
- Two ways to participate:
  - Speak by raising your hand on the control panel.
  - Written questions using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen.

# Topics for Today's Session



About  
Development  
Services

Building and Trade  
Contractor Services  
(BTCS)

Homestead  
Trade Permits

Residential  
Building  
Inspections

Code  
Resources

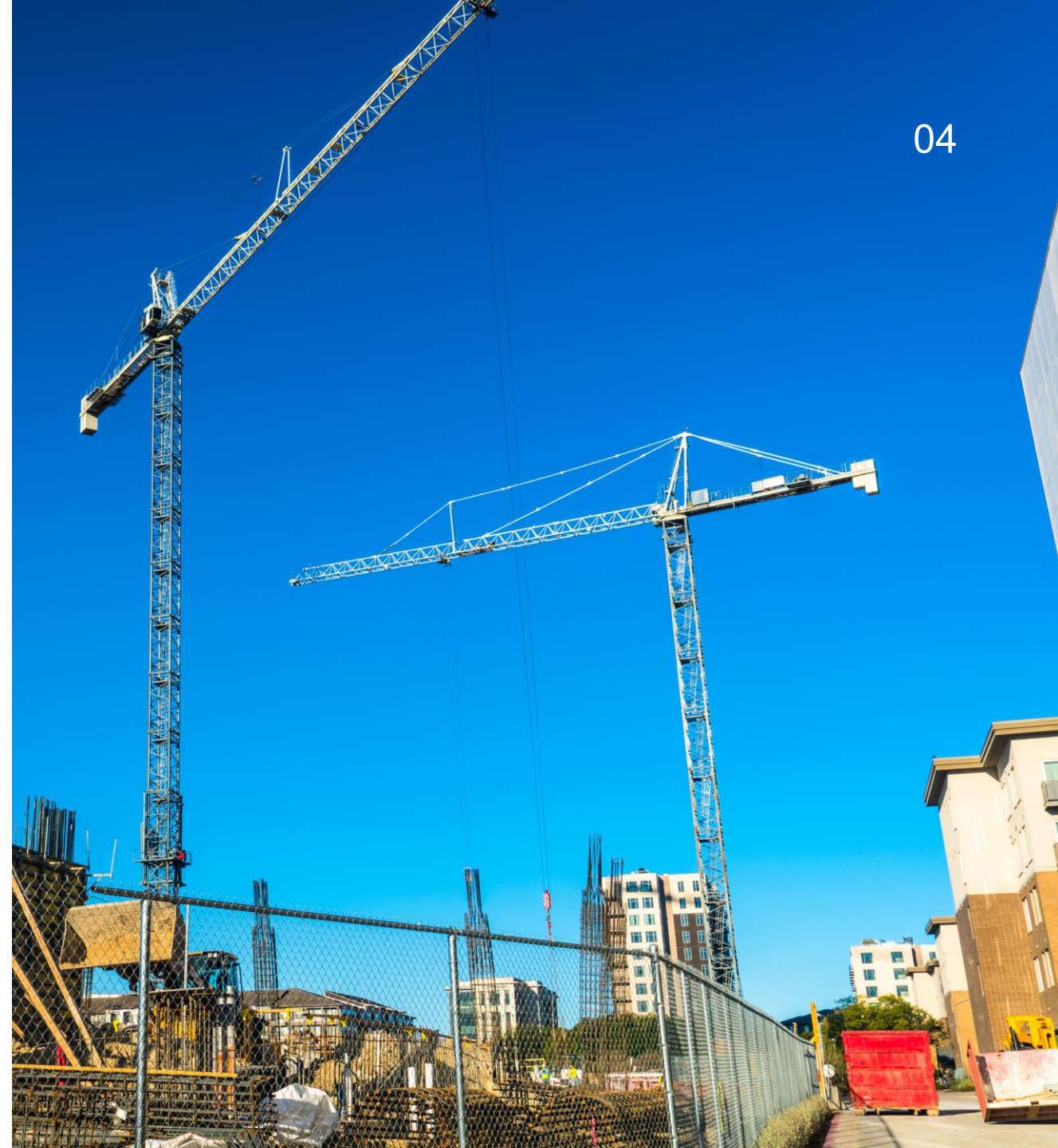
Common  
Inspection  
Deficiencies

Q&A



# About Development Services Department

- Committed to the safety of Austin's people, buildings, and environment.
- Compliance with local, state, national and international codes and regulations.
- We do this through review, permitting, inspection and code compliance.







# Building and Trade Contractor Services (BTCS)

DSD  
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Series

*Maria Jaramillo, Development Services  
Manager*

*Joshua Davis  
Supervisor, Consumer Services*



# Who is Building and Trade Contractor Services (BTCS)?



## Team Leadership

*Development Services Manager, Maria Jaramillo*

*Commercial Permitting and Contractor Registrations, Joshua Davis*

*Residential Permitting, Jessica Surber*



# Does the Work Require a Permit?

- Work exempt from obtaining a permit can be found in our website.
  - [Work Exempt from Building Permits | AustinTexas.gov](#)
- If it's not on the list, likely a permit is required



# Determine the Type of Project

- Is it a Building permit, a Building permit with trades, or just a Stand-Alone trade permit
  - Application process and DSD Divisions responsible for processing differ significantly
- BTCS is responsible for registering Contractors and the review and issuance of Stand-Alone permits (does not include the Plan Review)





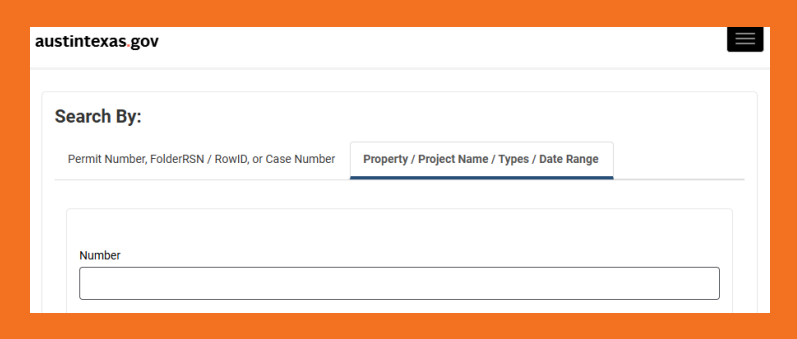
# General Contractor Vs. Homestead Trade Permit

Differences in being a General Contractor as a homeowner vs. doing the work and getting a Homestead trade permit as a homeowner.



# Property Public Search

Check the status and history of the property-public search: [Citizen Portal](#)



The screenshot shows the 'austintexas.gov' website with a search interface. The 'Search By:' section has two tabs: 'Permit Number, FolderRSN / RowID, or Case Number' and 'Property / Project Name / Types / Date Range'. The second tab is selected. Below the tabs is a text input field labeled 'Number'.





# What is Not Eligible



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Mobile homes or mobile home parks

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Commercial property

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Cannot be transferred to another contractor

---

Cannot work on the main electric service

---

Reclaiming and charging a ducted heating and air-conditioning system containing refrigerant

---

Liquefied petroleum plumbing systems, and auxiliary water system

# Eligibility Requirements

- Find out if your project qualifies as a Homestead Permit using our Homestead Permitting Qualification Guide.
- [Homeowner's Permit | AustinTexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov/department/homeowner-s-permit)





# Qualifications

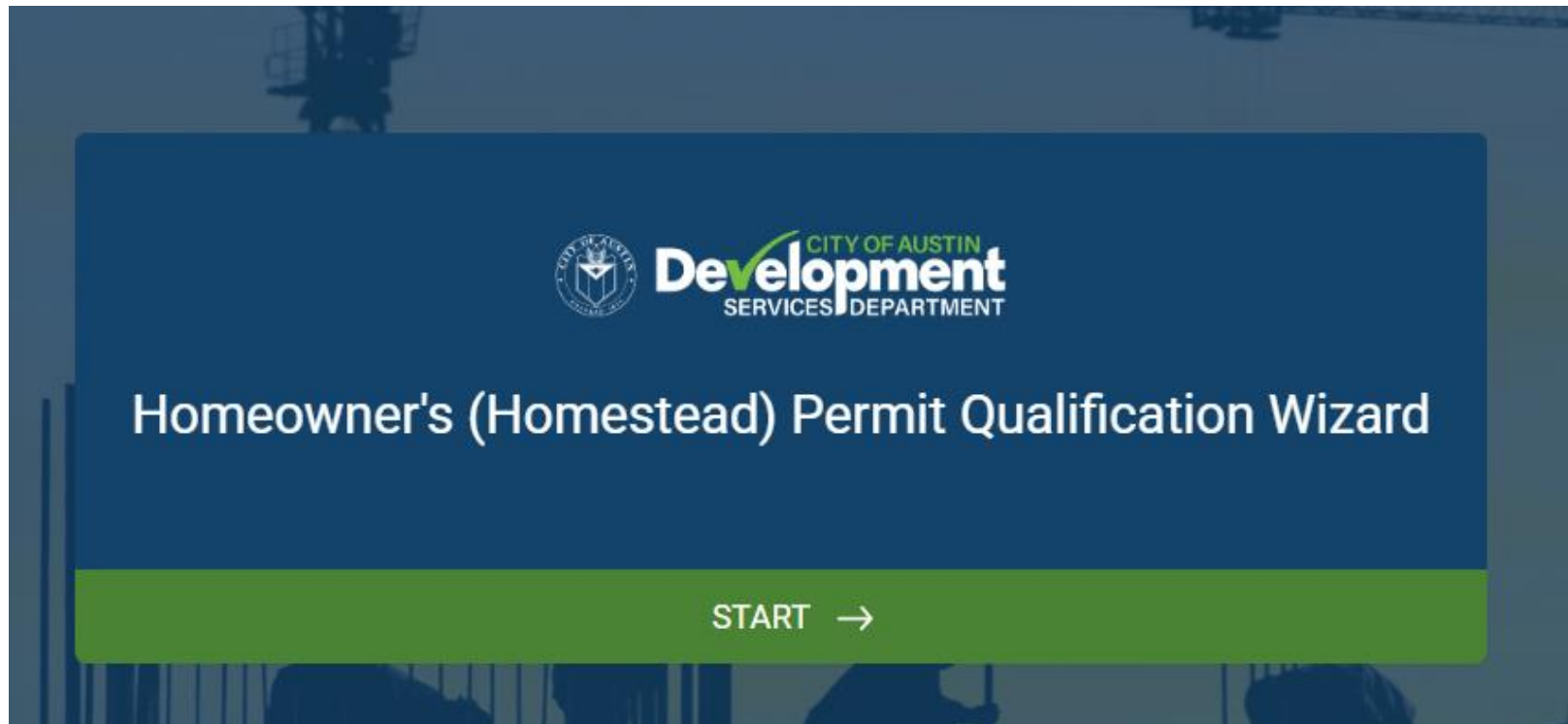
- Homeowner of property
  - (Tax authority example)
- Primary residence
- Performing work yourself

OWNER	
Name:	Owners Name
Secondary Name:	
Mailing Address:	
Owner ID:	1900443
% Ownership:	100.000000 %
Exemptions:	HS - Homestead
State Code:	A1
Homestead Audit:	

# How to Use our Wizard



Homestead permit qualification guide (wizard): [Homeowner's \(Homestead\) Permit Qualification Wizard](#)





## Who Needs to Register



Contractors must register with the City of Austin before activating permits.



Required for all trade permits  
(Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC, etc.)



Registration ensures the contractor  
is authorized and accountable.

# Permit Holder Responsibilities



- The permit holder is responsible for:
  - Ensuring work complies with code
  - Scheduling inspections
  - Completing the work

## Resources & Links



Registration and responsibilities:

[Contractor Registration | AustinTexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov/contractor-registration)



Applying for a Homestead Permit- Stand-Alone  
Trade Permit (Not Related to a Building Permit)

[Apply for a Homestead Permit](#)



Activating an existing Homestead Permit  
(Related to a Building Permit):

[Activate an Existing Homestead Permit](#)

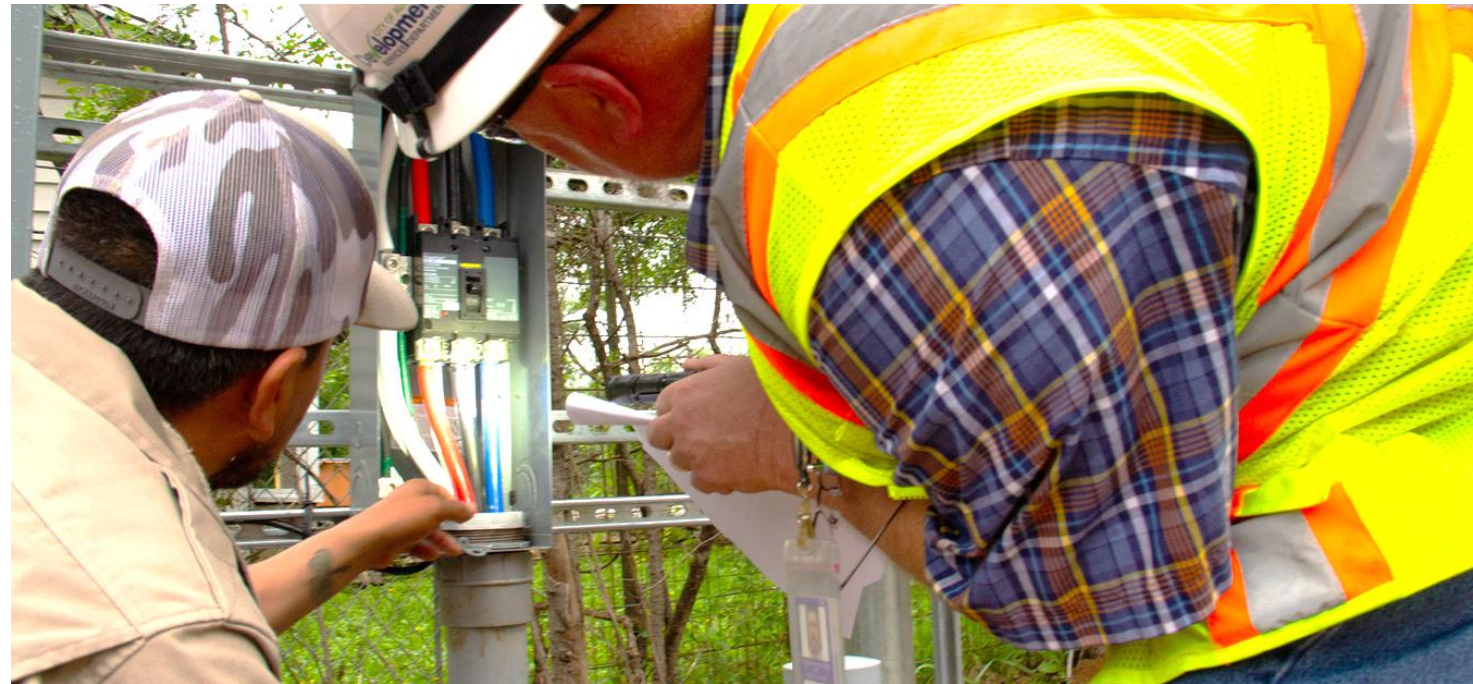


# BTCS Customer Support



- Live chat is available Monday-Thursday from 7:45 am to 4:00 pm.
  - Virtual and in-person appointments: [Building and Trade Contractor Services | AustinTexas.gov](#)
- Other helpful resources
  - Development Process Team: [Development Process Team | AustinTexas.gov](#)
  - Residential Plan Review: [Residential Plan Review | AustinTexas.gov](#)





# Residential Building Inspections

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Scott Cochran  
Division Manager Building Inspection

Development Services Department





# Overview



Code Resources



Safety of Building  
Codes And Inspections



Common Inspection  
Deficiencies



# Code Resources



Resource	Description	Link
Building Codes	2024 International Residential Code, 2023 NEC, 2024 Uniform Plumbing Code	<a href="https://www.austintexas.gov/page/building-technical-codes">https://www.austintexas.gov/page/building-technical-codes</a>
Land Development Code	Comprehensive regulations for land use and development in Austin	<a href="https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-and-land-development-code">https://www.austintexas.gov/department/city-and-land-development-code</a>
Building Criteria Manual	Technical guidelines that support the Land Development Code	<a href="https://library.municode.com/tx/austin/codes/building_criteria_manual">https://library.municode.com/tx/austin/codes/building_criteria_manual</a>
Austin Energy Design Criteria Manual	Standards for electric service design and construction	<a href="https://austinenergy.com/-/media/project/websites/austinenergy/contractors/designcriteriamanual.pdf">https://austinenergy.com/-/media/project/websites/austinenergy/contractors/designcriteriamanual.pdf</a>

# What do Building Codes Do?



**Establish minimum requirements for:**

One- and two-family dwellings  
Townhomes



**Ensure structures meet basic safety and health standards**

# IRC R101.3 – Code Purpose



*“To establish minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of safety, health, and general welfare through affordability, structural strength, means of egress, stability, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy conservation, and safety to life and property from fire and other hazards; and to provide a reasonable level of safety to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.”*

*— 2024 International Residential Code, Section R101.3*





## **Common Inspection Deficiencies**

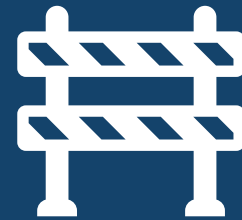
- Review of common inspection deficiencies
- Goal: Help improve compliance and inspection process

# Documentation & Scheduling



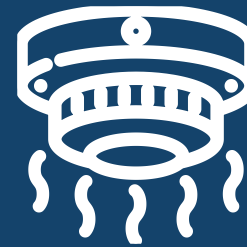
- Copy of approved plans not onsite
- Missing notes in Inspection Request (access codes, contractor info)
- Inspections not scheduled in correct order or grouped properly → causes automatic fail (see COA Manual 4.6.2)
- 3rd party reports not uploaded to permit attachments
- Required surveys (form survey, impervious cover survey) not uploaded or inconsistent

# Site & Structural Issues



- Approved plans don't match what's onsite (may need revision)
- Exterior windows and openings not sealed
- Foundation grading doesn't fall away from the building at least 6" within first 10 feet
- Overhead powerlines too close to structures (7'6" horizontal clearance) or water edges of a pool (10' horizontal clearance)

# Smoke Alarms & Carbon Monoxide Detectors



- Smoke alarms: not hard-wired with battery backup, missing in bedrooms, not on every story, too close to bathroom doors, not tested
- Carbon monoxide detectors: not hard-wired, missing near bedrooms, missing inside bedrooms with fuel appliances, not tested



# Electrical Safety



- Missing GFCI protection near sinks (within 6'), tubs/showers (within 6'), outdoors, and on countertops
- Missing AFCI protection on branch circuits

# Common Firewall Deficiencies



- The common wall shared by two townhouses includes plumbing or mechanical equipment, ducts, or vents inside the cavity — not allowed
- Wall is not fire-rated on both sides
- Wall does not extend tightly to the exterior walls or roof sheathing, as required
- These issues compromise fire separation between units

# Appliance Access



Required service access for HVAC units in attics is often incomplete or missing:

- Attic access opening not minimum 22"x30" Headroom at access point not at least 30 inches
- Access is more than 20 feet from equipment

# Appliance Access (cont.)



- No solid, continuous catwalk (must be at least 24" wide, using approved floor decking)No work platform in front of the unit (must be at least 30"x30")
- No light and service outlet near unit
- No light switch at attic entry (should not require entering attic to turn it on)

# Exhaust Dust & HVAC Issues



- Range exhaust ducts: not smooth/airtight, not sealed or terminated properly, wrong materials
- Missing make-up air for exhaust over 400 CFM
- Condenser breakers are over-fused



# Plumbing & Water Systems



- Waste pipes outside/exterior walls not protected from freezing
- Water closets don't meet minimum clearance requirements
- Missing vacuum breakers on hose bibs
- Shut-off valves dirty or hard to access
- Water systems missing expansion tank or similar device for thermal expansion control



## Two ways to participate:

1. Speak by raising your hand on the control panel.
2. Written questions using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen.



**How did we do?**

[CityofAustin.Formstack.com/forms/  
Engagement\\_Survey\\_Inform](https://CityofAustin.Formstack.com/forms/Engagement_Survey_Inform)



**Join us at our next session.**

[PublicInput.com/DSDInfoSeries](https://PublicInput.com/DSDInfoSeries)



# DSD Info Series



Thank you!

Join us at our next session at  
[publicinput.com/dsdinfoseries](https://publicinput.com/dsdinfoseries)

