

## Legal Responsibilities and Natural Building



You must do your research to see if your local building department requires an architect or an engineer to build with an alternative building method (or 'Natural Building').

The International Building Code basically states that in order to build using 'Alternative Building Methods,' the local jurisdiction will decide.

Typically, in most states, cities, and counties, they will require at least

one of the following:

- a permit set stamped and signed by a licensed architect (must be licensed in that state)
- drawings from a licensed structural engineer, stamped and signed (must be licensed in that state)



The first step is to find out what city or county your building department resides in and give them a call, ask for the residential or commercial plan reviewer and tell them you'd like to build a building using alternative building methods and what will they require for a Building Permit.

Some people build without permit if they live in a very rural area or live in a county/city with no mandated building codes. However, if you do not get a Permit and your jurisdiction became aware of this, most likely a 'stop work order' would be placed on the project, you'd get fined, and possibly have to tear down what you started. The benefits of getting a permit is that you are opening the doorways for many others to do the same down the line. You will also be able to be public about your project and advertise it, host workshops, and when it's complete have home tours, etc. without the fear of getting caught.

Root Down Designs has successfully obtained building permits for multiple projects incorporating alternative materials & methods of construction. We have found that when the Building Department is contacted on the front end, an introduction occurs, and the final documents submitted are highly detailed and well-thought-out, the building officials are more than willing to work with us and to permit the proposed plans.

