

Documents for a building permit in Madeira

What to gather before you apply

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DOCUMENTS AND PERMITS

Documents for a building permit in Madeira

Much of the delay in permitting comes from incomplete applications. Knowing what to include from the start saves months of requests for more information.



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In Madeira, as in the rest of Portugal, private building work is controlled by the municipalities. A large share of delays does not come from the technical review but from incomplete applications. When a document is missing, the council asks for more information and the process stops until it arrives.

1. Property documents

- An up-to-date land registry certificate, proving ownership and confirming areas and charges.
- The tax record (caderneta predial) from the Tax Authority.
- Proof of standing when the applicant is not the owner: power of attorney, condominium authorisation or a contract.
- Earlier permits, if the building already exists, including the use authorisation (or use permit).

2. Baseline information

- A topographic survey with levels, boundaries and existing buildings.
- A location plan and extracts from the municipal master plan (PDM) and other applicable plans.
- A prior information request, if one was made, since a favourable reply guides and protects the design.
- Current photos of the site and surroundings.

3. Architectural design

- A design statement explaining how the project meets the PDM rules.
- Plans, sections and elevations, with changes marked in colour for work on an existing building.
- A table of areas, a cost estimate and a timetable.
- A declaration of responsibility from the architect and proof of professional registration.

4. Engineering designs

Depending on the work, these cover structure, water and drainage, electrics, telecoms (ITED), gas, thermal performance, acoustics, fire safety and accessibility. Each one has its own declaration of responsibility. Under a full permit, the law allows them to be submitted after the architecture is approved, within a set deadline; under prior notice, they all go in with the application.

5. Opinions from other bodies

If the plot is next to regional roads, watercourses, protected areas or listed buildings, the council consults the relevant bodies. Addressing these constraints in the design avoids unfavourable opinions.

6. After approval

Since the 2024 reform (the planning Simplex), councils no longer issue a permit document: proof of payment of the fees serves as the title. To start work you must pay those fees and provide the contractor's licence or certificate, workers' accident insurance, the site logbook and the names of the site manager and the site supervisor.

What changes from council to council

Each of Madeira's 11 municipalities has its own municipal planning and building regulation and its own PDM (local master plan). That is where the points that vary most are set:

- How to submit: the council's online platform, file formats (PDF, DWF) and digital signature.
- Extra documents: photographs, a site plan at a set scale, a model or an on-site simulation.
- Works exempt from a permit: walls, outbuildings and small alterations that some councils exempt and others do not.
- Fees and guarantees: amounts, how they are calculated and the guarantee for infrastructure works.
- Estimated cost of works: some councils use their own value per m².
- PDM rules: heights, setbacks, building ratios and rules for historic centres.

Before starting the design, ask the council planning desk for the current list of required documents or check it on the council website.

Quick checklist before applying

The exact documents vary with the type of work and with each council. Check the list on the municipality's portal before submitting: a complete application is the fastest to approve.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Up-to-date land registry and tax record
- Survey and PDM extracts
- Complete architecture with declarations
- Engineering designs or a deadline to submit them
- External constraints identified

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