

Building Permits Survey

Definition Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a housing unit?

A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a group of rooms or a single room intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have a direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

2. What is the valuation of construction?

The valuation is the estimated value of the residential structure as shown on the building permit. If no value is listed on the permit, we accept estimates from the permit official reporting to Census. Please do not report permit fees as the value of construction. If no values are required for your municipality, please note this in Section 5 (Comments) on the C-404 form. We will then place the acronym NVR in the address label area of your form. NVR denotes "no value required".

If reporting via Internet, please check the box "Office does not collect valuation of construction" on the New Housing Units by Type of Structure page.

3. Why are manufactured/mobile homes not included in this survey?

A manufactured/mobile home is a movable or portable dwelling constructed to be towed on its own chassis. It is manufactured with transportation gear as an integral part of the structure. Manufactured/mobile homes are built under the HUD Code, which means they are inspected at the factory and are exempt from local government building inspections. Manufactured or mobile homes are included in the Census Bureau's Manufactured Homes Survey (MHS) conducted by the Construction Expenditures Branch. To obtain information on this survey, visit the MHS website or call 1-301-763-1605.

4. If the manufactured/mobile home is placed on a permanent foundation, is it counted in the Building Permits survey?

No; if the manufactured home is HUD-coded, it is not counted in this survey.

5. Are modular homes included in this survey?

Yes; modular or prefabricated homes are considered new construction and are included in this survey. Sections of modular housing are built in a factory and are transported to the construction site to be joined together on a permanent foundation. Modular homes are not inspected by HUD at the factory.

6. What is the major difference between modular manufactured and HUD-coded manufactured homes?

Modular manufactured homes are constructed off-site, transported and assembled at the construction site and do not receive HUD certification at the factory. HUD-coded manufactured homes, however, always receive HUD certification and are built with transportation gear as an integral part of the structure.