

CHANGING VACATION HOME TO PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

Property owners can apply to change their vacation home into a permanent settlement/residence anywhere in Kuusamo (yhdyskuntatekniikan lautakunta 19.6.2019 § 106).

Changing purposed use of the building can be applied for through a construction/building permit. Depending on the location, you might need a deviation decision/exceptional permit or a placement agreement before applying for a building permit.

In planned areas with designated building plots, changing a vacation home into a permanent residence usually requires an alteration of plan, unless the current plan already allows changing the purposed use.

In rural areas, changing a vacation home into a permanent residence in shorelines areas always requires a deviation decision. Outside of the shoreline areas applications are examined on a case-by-case basis. A Building permit can be applied at the same time as a deviation decision. When preparing the deviation decision, the authorities ensure that the project meets all applicable requirement (Construction Act/Rakl 42 §, 45 §, 46 §, 62 § and Land Use Act/AKL 131 §). The hearing the neighbours can be carried out at the same time for both permits.

The building plot and the building must meet the following requirements:

- The area of the building plot must comply with the building regulations or the plan for that area
- The building plot must be accessible year-round for emergency and service vehicles, and the connection to the main road must suit its intended use
- The building's distance from the shoreline should follow the current building regulations
- Handling the wastewater must comply with current regulations
- The property being changed to permanent residence must meet the requirements for a permanent residential building according to current legislation

The most important step is to assess **the building's energy efficiency and its compliance with residential and accessibility requirements.** Based on this assessment, any necessary renovations or modifications can be identified. To get a sense of the whole picture and costs, it's recommended that the property owner looks at the building's energy efficiency and suitability right at the start of the process.

The city can grant **a temporary building permit to change the purposed use** for up to ten (10) years (Construction Act/Rakl 42 §, 43 §) if additional time is needed for repair and modification work. Before the deadline expires, the property owner must apply for an official building permit to change the purposed use. **If the building hasn't been fixed to meet the regulations, and a building permit hasn't been applied for within the deadline, the building automatically turns into a vacation home.**