

CITY OF ANNISTON

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

OUR OBJECTIVE

Our goal during the planning and permitting review is to make the process an efficient and customer service oriented experience. This process will begin at City Hall with the newly developed Planning and Development Services Department. Our focus is to assist the public and development professionals from the beginning to the completion of a project to ensure the highest standard of satisfaction. This will occur without the loss of integrity, compliance, or attention to any building or zoning codes, while recognizing the need for individual attention.

FORMS NEEDED

All projects require a **Building Permit Application**.

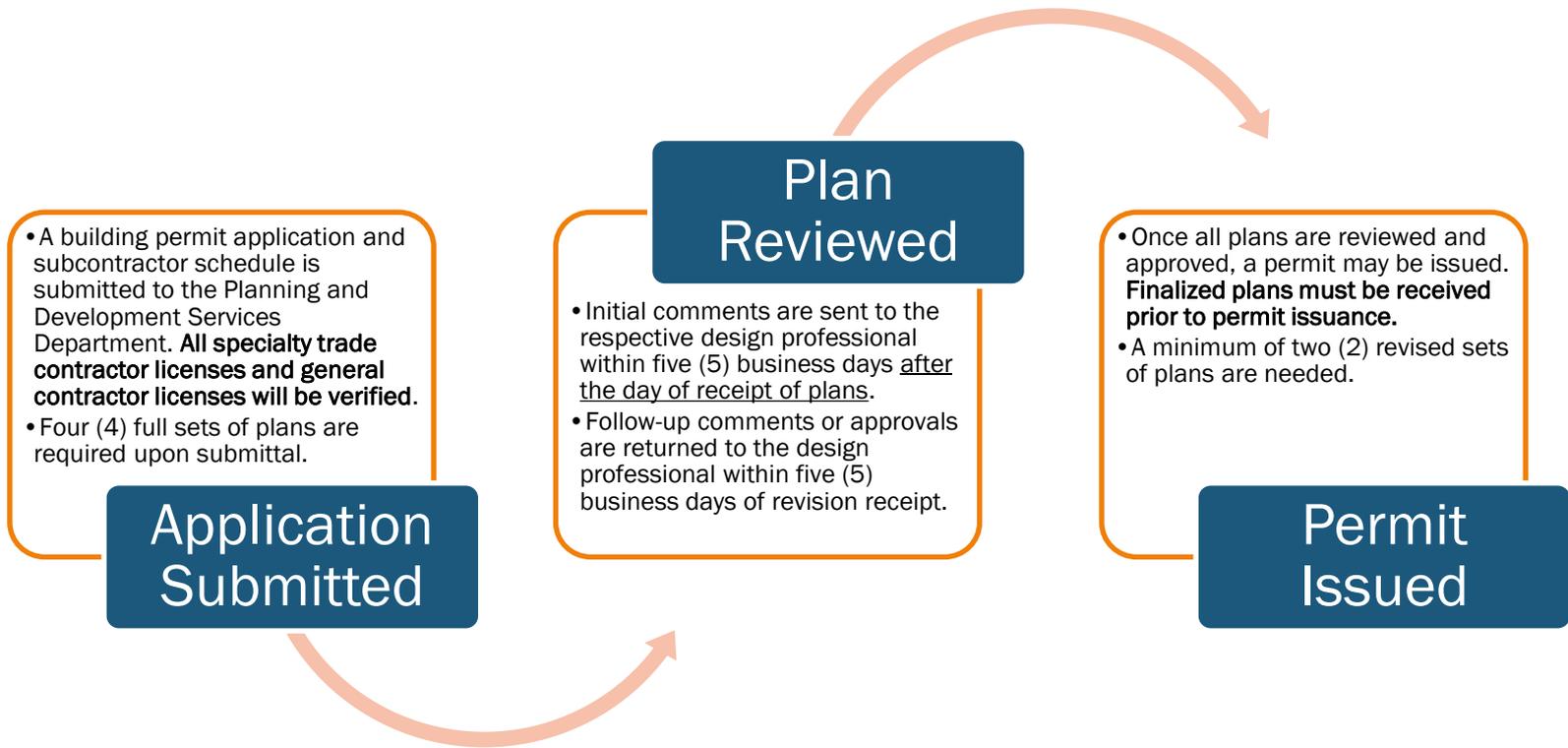
Other forms that may be needed are:

<i>Land Disturbance Permit Application (available from the Engineering Department)</i>	<i>Curb Cut Permit Application (available from the Engineering Department)</i>
<i>Subcontractor Schedule</i>	<i>Curb Cut Detail (available from the Engineering Department)</i>
<i>Street Cut Permit Application (available from the Engineering Department)</i>	<i>Home Builders Exemption Form</i>

Sign permits require a **Sign Permit Application**.

Rental inspections require a **Rental Inspection Application**.

FLOW CHART FOR PLAN REVIEW



It is the permit holders' responsibility to ensure all subcontractors (all tiers) obtain the proper business license.

CONTACT INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT	NAME	TITLE	PHONE	E-MAIL
Planning & Development Services	Toby Bennington, AICP	Director	(256) 231-7720	tbennington@anniston.al.gov
Planning & Development Services	Lee Willis	Technical Inspector	(256) 231-7751	lwillis@anniston.al.gov
Planning & Development Services	Larry Talley	Technical Inspector	(256) 231-7778	ltalley@anniston.al.gov
Planning & Development Services	Neeli Faulkner	Planning Secretary	(256) 231-7720	nfaulkner@anniston.al.gov
Engineering	Kevin Ashley, P.E.	City Engineer	(256) 231-7750	kashley@anniston.al.gov
Engineering	James Green, CFM QCI	Engineering Aide	(256) 231-7750	jgreen@anniston.al.gov
Fire Department	Rodney Ball	Fire Marshal	(256) 231-7644	rball@anniston.al.gov
Anniston Water Works & Sewer Board	Heath Denton	Engineering Technician	(256) 241-5002	hdenton@awwsb.org
Anniston Water Works & Sewer Board	Phillip Burgett	Manager of Engineering Services	(256) 241-5002	pburgett@awwsb.org

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
FAX**

(256) 241-0245

ENGINEERING FAX

(256) 231-7748

**MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 2168
Anniston, AL 36202**

AGENCY LINKS

County Government

Calhoun County: www.calhouncounty.org

Calhoun County Emergency Management Agency: www.calhounema.org

Calhoun County Health Department: www.adph.org/calhoun

Calhoun County Highway Department: www.calhouncountyroads.com

Calhoun County Online Property Tax Record System (GIS): www.gis.calhouncounty.org

Calhoun County 911: www.calhoun911.org

AGENCY LINKS

State Government

State of Alabama: www.alabama.gov

Alabama Building Commission: www.bc.alabama.gov

Alabama Department of Transportation: www.dot.state.al.us

Alabama Department of Environment Management (ADEM): www.adem.state.al.us

Alabama Emergency Management Agency: www.ema.alabama.gov

Alabama Fire Marshal's Office: www.firemarshal.alabama.gov

AGENCY LINKS

Federal Government

U.S. Government: www.usa.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.fema.gov

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA): www.osha.gov

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov

AGENCY LINKS

State Licensing Boards

Alabama Board of Architects: www.boa.alabama.gov

Alabama Board of Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Contractors:
www.hvacboard.state.al.us

Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors:
www.bels.alabama.gov

Alabama Electrical Contractors Board: www.genconbd.alabama.gov

Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board: www.hblb.alabama.gov

Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board: www.pgfb.state.al.us

AGENCY LINKS

Codes

ADECA- Energy and Residential Codes: www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/energy

Alabama Energy Codes Manual:

www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/energy/Documents/Codes/AERC%20Manual.pdf

International Code Council: www.iccsafe.org

AGENCY LINKS

Trade Organizations

Associated General Contractors of Alabama: www.alagc.org

Home Builders Association of Alabama: www.hbaa.org

Home Builders Association of Greater Calhoun County: www.hbagcc.com

Local Utilities

Alabama Power: www.alabamapower.com

Alagasco: www.alagasco.com

Anniston Water Works and Sewer Board: www.awwsb.org

AT&T: www.att.com

Cable One: www.cableone.net

Alabama One-Call (Utility Locating Service): www.al1call.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where is the Planning & Development Services Department located?

A: We are situated at Anniston City Hall which is located at 1128 Gurnee Avenue in Anniston.

Q: What are your operating hours?

A: We are open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, excluding observed holidays. Permits are issued from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

Q: Do you accept credit or debit cards as payment for permit and inspection fees?

A: No. Only cash or check can be accepted as payment methods for fees.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: When is a building permit required?

A: A building permit is required on all non-federal construction, remodeling , and/or repair projects where the total project cost is in excess of \$1,000.00.

Q: What is the cost of a building permit?

A: For a project that costs up to \$2,000.00, the permit fee is a flat \$16.00. For a project that costs over \$2,000.00, the fee is \$16.00 plus \$4.00 per one thousand dollar increment, or portion thereof, thereafter. It should be noted that when power needs to be reconnected to a building and Alabama Power Company requires an inspection, there is a \$16.00 charge for the inspection regardless of project cost.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What happens if a project is started before a permit is obtained?

A: The first offense will result in a double permit fee with increasing penalties for subsequent violations thereafter.

Q: Do I need a permit to work on my own property?

A: Probably. If a residential property owner(s) of record (the person(s) listed on a property's deed) is performing painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, installation of cabinets, countertops, or similar finish work themselves on their own residential property without hiring any of the work out to independent contractors, then a permit is not required. Any work outside the limits of the above listed items of work will need a permit on residential projects. For commercial projects, there are no exclusions and any work costing in excess of \$1,000.00 will need to be permitted, regardless if the work is being performed by a contractor or the owner(s) of record.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What types of work require a permit?

A: The following activities shall require a permit:

- Building construction to include new buildings and additions
- Renovations and alterations to existing buildings
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Gas
- HVAC
- Grading, excavating and filling
- Fences and accessory structures
- Decks, driveways, etc.

As a best practice, please contact the Planning and Development Department to determine whether or not a project will require a permit.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I have obtained a permit for my project. What do I need to do with the green permit card I was given?

A: The green permit card should be posted on the front side of the property so it is visible from the roadway and your project is easily identified by City personnel as being permitted.

Q: What about curb and gutter alterations?

A: When work is to occur where the City's curb and gutter will need to be cut or altered and/or when the roadway needs to be cut for utility repairs, the Engineering Department requires a curb cut permit and/or street cut permit. Please contact the Engineering Department with questions concerning the requirements and fees pertaining to these permits.

CONTRACTORS/LICENSING/EXEMPTIONS

Q: Are there any special licensing requirements for contractors?

Yes. At a minimum, all companies or persons you hire to perform any work, regardless of the cost, must have both their Anniston and Calhoun County business licenses. Individuals that are working “hourly” must be paid via IRS Forms W-2 or 1099, or are otherwise considered contractors that will need to obtain their business licenses. Questions regarding a City business license should be directed to the Finance Department at (256) 231-7716. (For information regarding a Calhoun County business license, call (256) 241-2800.) Any person that is hired to work on any type of electrical, HVAC, or plumbing/gas system should be properly licensed by the Alabama Electrical Contractors Board, Alabama Board of Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Contractors and Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board, respectively. A residential contractor that either constructs a new residence or renovates, remodels, or adds space onto an existing residence where the total cost is in excess of \$10,000.00 must be licensed by the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board. A commercial contractor that works on a project where they have a contract in excess of \$50,000.00 must be licensed by the Alabama General Contractors Licensure Board.

CONTRACTORS/LICENSING/EXEMPTIONS

Q: Can I work on my own electrical, HVAC, and/or plumbing/gas system without hiring a professional?

A: Yes. State laws do allow property owners to work on their own electrical, HVAC, and plumbing/gas system. However, only the property owner(s) of record can perform those types of work, with no help or assistance from anyone other than a licensed contractor. Permits and inspections will still be required, no matter who performs the work.

Q: Can I build my own residence, acting as my own contractor?

A: Yes, with exceptions. A property owner can act as their own contractor and build their own residence. However, per the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Law, the property owner must fill out a sworn statement that they understand that the residence cannot be sold or offered for sale within one (1) year of completion of the residence. For more detailed requirements, please contact the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board. Plan, permit, and inspection requirements are the same whether the residence is constructed by the owner or a contractor.

CONTRACTORS/LICENSING/EXEMPTIONS

Q: Can I build my own commercial building, acting as my own contractor?

A: Yes, with exceptions. A property owner can act as their own contractor and build their own commercial building. However, there are strict rules pertaining to those superintending the work, as well as contract amounts for contractors working directly for an owner. For more detailed requirements, please contact the Alabama General Contractors Licensure Board. Plan, permit, and inspection requirements are the same whether the commercial building is constructed by the owner or a contractor.

CONTRACTORS/LICENSING/EXEMPTIONS

Q: Can a home builder work on commercial property or a general contractor work on a residence?

A: Possibly. A person or firm that possesses a license issued through the Alabama Home Builders Licensure Board can perform work on a commercial property, but their contract amount cannot be \$50,000.00 or greater. A person or firm that possesses a license issued through the Alabama Contractors Licensure Board can work on residential properties, but their contract amount cannot be \$10,000.00 or greater, unless their license was issued prior to January 1, 1992 and was issued with the “Building Construction” category. For answers to specific questions, please contact the respective licensure boards.

PLANS

Q: I have been told my project requires the services of an architect. Why?

A: Alabama law has specific requirements as to when an architect is required. The following are examples when an architect is required:

- Any commercial building 2,500 sq. ft. or larger that is erected, enlarged or altered
- Any building that is to be used as a school, church, auditorium, or other building intended for the assembly of people, regardless of size
- Any existing building where a change in occupancy to a more restrictive occupancy is to take place (i.e. conversion of residential building to a commercial building)
- Roof pitch change projects on commercial buildings (i.e. from flat roof to pitched roof) require the service of either an architect or professional engineer

PLANS

Q: I am building a new commercial building and have been told I need not only an architect, but also an engineer. Why?

A: Alabama law allows architects to “perform engineering incidental to the practice of architecture” and engineers to “perform architecture incidental to the practice of engineering”. However, neither can design a whole system incidental to their professional practice. Foundation drawings are considered to be an engineered system and must be designed by a professional engineer.

Q: My plans are stamped by a design professional registered in another state. Can I submit these plans for review?

A: No. Any plans that requires the services of a design professional must be stamped by a design professional registered to practice in the State of Alabama. Plans that do not require the services of a design professional will not be accepted if stamped by a design professional not registered to practice in Alabama.

PLANS

Q: My plans were reviewed and a note was requested to be added to the plans stating that I need soil testing. Why?

A: We require soil testing on commercial projects to check the properties of the soil area where the building is to be constructed. The tests should show whether or not the area contains previously placed fill dirt or soils that are not suitable to support the weight of the new building (bearing capacity).

CODES

Q: What codes does the City of Anniston currently have adopted?

A: The City of Anniston currently has adopted the 2008 National Electric Code (NFPA 70) and the 2009 Editions of the following codes:

- International Building Code
- International Residential Code
- International Existing Building Code
- International Fire Code
- International Property Maintenance Code
- International Plumbing Code
- International Fuel Gas Code
- International Mechanical Code

The ANSI A117.1-2003 is used for accessibility requirements. The City of Anniston also enforces the Alabama Energy Code.

CODES

Q: What is the Alabama Energy Code?

A: The Alabama Energy Code was enacted by the Alabama Legislature to adopt mandatory residential and commercial energy codes for the entire state. It also gave the board the authority to adopt mandatory residential building codes for jurisdictions that had not implemented such a code prior to March 2010. For the first time in Alabama's history, the state will have mandatory energy codes for all new construction and substantial renovation. The Alabama Energy Code went into effect on October 1, 2012.

INSPECTIONS

Q: What inspections are performed by department personnel?

A: The Technical Inspectors perform building, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing/gas inspections, as well as business license and rental property inspections. They also investigate unpermitted projects, illegal contractors, and assign/resolve address issues within the city limits.

Q: How do I request an inspection?

A: To request an inspection, call (256) 231-7720 Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Please schedule an inspection no less than 4 hours prior to needing the inspection performed.

Q: If I work on my own property, do I still need an inspection?

A: Yes. Property owners working on their own properties are subject to the same code requirements and inspections that contractors are subjected to.

INSPECTIONS

Q: I live in Anniston's Police Jurisdiction (PJ). Can I request an inspection at my house?

A: No. Anniston's Planning and Development Services Department only provides inspection services within the corporate city limits of Anniston.

Q: Does the Planning and Development Services Department perform home inspections prior to the purchase of a home?

A: No. Anniston's Planning and Development Services Department does not provide private home inspections.

Q: Alabama Power told me I have to have an inspection prior to electricity being turned on at my home or rental property. What do I do?

A: A \$16.00 electrical reconnect fee is required before scheduling an electrical inspection. Currently, the City does not have the ability to accept online payments for this fee. Please visit the Planning and Development Services Department to pay this fee and schedule your inspection.

INSPECTIONS

Q: I have submitted a business license application and have been told that I will have to have the building inspected prior to the issuance of the license. Why?

A: The City of Anniston requires that both our Technical Inspectors and the Fire Marshal perform a business license inspection on a building where business activities are proposed prior to the issues of a business license. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure that there are no life-safety issues within the building and that the building has been properly maintained and is safe for occupancy. If there are issues noted during the inspection that needs to be corrected, you will be given an inspection report detailing the issues. Please remember that it is the license applicant's responsibility to contact the persons that performed the inspection to notify them that the noted issues have been resolved and the building is ready for reinspection.

INSPECTIONS

Q: What is a Certificate of Occupancy?

A: A Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) is a document issued by the City of Anniston that gives legal approval for a building to be occupied. A C.O. is to be issued on newly constructed residences and commercial buildings that are newly constructed or have had an addition added, a renovation performed, or where an occupancy classification has changed. Once a project is completed or near completion, a final inspection will need to be scheduled with our department. All interested parties (Inspectors, Fire Marshal, Engineering, & AWWSB) will attend the final inspection and will note any deficiencies found pertaining to their respective items of interest. Any issues noted will have to be resolved prior to the issuance of a C.O. However, a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (T.C.O.) can be issued to allow temporary occupancy of a building while issues noted during the final inspection are being resolved. The T.C.O. will be in effect for a reasonable and mutually agreed upon time frame that will allow for any outstanding issues to be resolved. It should be noted that if life-safety issues are found during the final inspection, neither a C.O. nor a T.C.O. will be issued.

ADDRESSES

Q: I am going to build a new building and do not know who to call to have an address assigned. Who do I call?

A: Call the Planning and Development Services Department at (256) 231-7720 and someone will be happy to assist you with the address assignment.

Q: I am having an issue concerning my existing address. Who do I contact?

A: As stated above, call the Planning and Development Services Department and someone will assist you.

ADDRESSES

Q: I have been told that I am supposed to have address numbers on my building. I already have address numbers on my mailbox. Do I have to have them on both the house and the mailbox?

A: Yes. Both the City Code of Ordinances and several of the ICC Codes require address numbers to be posted on the structure, both residential and commercial. The minimum height of the numbers are specified to be no less than four (4) inches in height in a color that contrasts to the background to which they are attached. Having the address numbers posted in an obvious location (on or near the front door) will assist first responders in finding the residence or commercial building during emergency situations as soon as possible.

ENGINEERING

Q: What does the term “BMP” mean?

A: “BMP” stands for “best management practices” and refers to methods and materials used to control the flow of silt/sediment from one property onto the next during construction activities. Examples of BMP’s would be silt fence, staked hay bales, stone construction entrances, riprap ditches, etc.

Q: How do I know if I am in a flood zone and what does it mean if I am?

A: You can look up all properties on the Calhoun County GIS website (FEMA Flood Zone Layer). You may also contact the City Engineer who serves as the City’s Certified Floodplain Manager.

Q: Who do I contact for Right of Way (ROW) access and driveways?

A: The Engineering Department will answer any and all Right-Of-Way Questions.

Q: Civil Matters vs. City Matters

A civil matter involves an issue that is located on privately owned property that is not subject to a City Ordinance, City Owned and/or maintained Right-Of-Way, or a city maintained easement. City Officials have no jurisdiction on private property unless a violation of the code of ordinances has occurred.

ZONING

Q: What is zoning?

A: Zoning is the dividing of properties into various zoning districts that each permit specific uses. Zoning laws typically specify the areas in which residential, industrial, recreational, and/or commercial activities may take place.

Q: How do I find out zoning for my property?

A: You may either contact the Planning and Development Services Department or visit the City's website to view a copy of our zoning map.

ZONING

Q: How do I obtain a zoning verification letter?

A: To obtain a zoning verification letter, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department. You will need to provide the property address, your name, your company, and your address.

Q: How do I request rezoning for my property or a zoning variance?

A: Please contact the City Planner at (256) 231-7724 and he will be happy to assist you.

SIGNAGE

Q: How do I obtain a sign permit?

A: Anyone wishing to obtain a sign permit will need to complete a Sign Permit Application and submit a drawing of the intended sign. Once zoning is verified and the application is approved by the City Planner, a sign permit may be issued.

Q: What is the cost of a sign permit?

A: The cost of a sign permit is \$10.00 for an administrative fee *plus* \$0.25 per square foot.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS

Q: When is a rental inspection required?

A: A rental inspection is required for any residential occupancy where anyone other than the property owner(s) of record occupies the unit.

Q: I have a rent-to-own agreement or a lease-to-purchase agreement. Am I still required to have a rental inspection?

A: Yes. A rental inspection will be required if the person(s) occupying the residence is anyone other than the owner(s) (i.e. the named person(s) on the property deed).

Q: If I come to schedule a rental inspection, can it be performed the same day?

A: Possibly. The inspectors will always make the best effort to complete rental inspections on the day requested, but inspections may be postponed to the following day if there are scheduling conflicts.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS

Q: I am moving into a rental home and the Anniston Water Works and Sewer Board (AWWSB) has told me I have to have a rental inspection performed before my water will be connected. Why?

A: The City of Anniston began performing inspections on all residential rental units (houses, duplexes, apartments, etc.) due to ongoing complaints from tenants about living conditions of their rental units. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure that all rented/leased dwelling units meet minimum property standards and are safe for occupancy.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS

Q: How often is a rental inspection required?

A: The Certificate of Occupancy is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue, or is valid until the dwelling becomes vacant following the expiration date. A dwelling unit may be occupied more than once during the twelve (12) month period without the need for another inspection.

Q: What do the inspectors look for during a rental inspection?

A: For a list of rental inspection requirements, please contact the Planning and Development Services Department at (256) 231-7720.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS

Q: I have a complaint against my landlord. Can you help?

A: Possibly. Upon the submittal of a rental inspection application, each applicant is provided a copy of The Alabama Tenants' Handbook. This helpful text will provide you instructions on what to do in the event there is an unsafe condition (such as bad wiring or a sewage leak) that you didn't cause. If your landlord refuses to repair a hazardous condition after you have provided him/her with written notification of the problem AND the problem is a safety hazard, contact a building inspector.

Q: Where can I get a copy of The Alabama Tenants' Handbook?

A: The Planning and Development Services Department will be happy to provide you a copy of the handbook free of charge. You can also download a .PDF version online at <http://www.alabamalegalhelp.org/resource/the-alabama-tenants-handbook> .