



**TECHNICAL BULLETIN**  
**Community Development & Planning, Building Inspections**  
**TOPIC: Work Exempt From Permit Requirements**  
**Effective May 24, 2012**

This Technical Bulletin lists the various work categories that are exempt from permit requirements.

Please note that any exemption from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed as authorization for any work to be done in any manner that violates provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances.

A. Building permits shall not be required for the following items.

1. Retaining walls that are not more than 4 feet (1219 mm) in developed height at any point when measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or imposed load or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids. See Article 1 of this Chapter regarding “tiered” retaining walls.
2. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
3. Swings and other playground equipment.
4. Prefabricated inflatable swimming pools that are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep.
5. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
6. Flatwork (pedestrian sidewalks, vehicle parking and maneuvering areas) on private property.
7. Replacement of siding materials with materials of similar character. The installation of siding systems such as, but not necessarily limited to, stucco and Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems require a permit.
8. Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches (1753 mm) in height.
9. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes.
10. *Replacement of roof covering materials when the area of replacement is 10 percent or less of roof area.*

B. For 1- and 2-family structures only regulated by the *International Residential Code*, permits shall not be required for the following items.

1. Building:

- a. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 100 square feet (9.29 m<sup>2</sup>).
- b. *Uncovered deck or uncovered patio that is 30 inches or less above grade at any point, the following is applicable:*
  - i. *Uncovered decks and patios that are over 12 inches above the average level of the adjoining ground cannot intrude in any building setback or zero lot line maintenance easements as required by the zoning ordinance.*
  - ii. *Placement of any deck or patio cannot re-divert surface water onto adjoining property or impede the use of the easement for the maintenance provisions.*
- c. *Replacement of roof covering materials when the area of replacement is 10 percent or less of roof area.*

2. Electrical:

- a. Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
- b. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets thereof.
- c. Replacement of branch circuit over current devices of the required capacity in the same location.
- d. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating as less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
- e. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

2. Plumbing

- a. Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
- b. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- c. Portable fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.
- d. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent

pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.

- e. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

3. Mechanical

- a. Portable heating appliances.
  - b. Portable ventilation appliances.
  - c. Portable cooling units.
  - d. Steam, hot- or chilled-water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
  - e. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
  - f. Portable evaporative coolers.
  - g. Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds (4.54 kg) or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.
  - h. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.
- C. A fence permit to install, enlarge or repair any fence **is not required when** the repair or replacement of fencing is less than 50 percent of one side of the fence is being repaired and/or replaced.
- D. A sign permit to erect or alter a sign, including the copy face or lettering of any sign, either by changing the message or by renovating an existing message, or erect any sign or sign structure **is not required when** changing a changeable copy message or a message center sign message; general maintenance such as repainting the same message or changing the face of a sign permitted as an off-site advertising sign.