



Work exempt from permit requirements

Do I need a permit if I am doing repairs?

A permit is not required for ordinary repairs to structures, replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles. Such repairs shall not include the cutting away of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety. [§R105.2.2 and §105.2.2]

What are some examples of work that does NOT require a permit?

Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws, statutes, regulations or ordinances of the jurisdiction. Permits shall not be required for the following:

Building:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area is not greater than 200 square feet (18.58 m²).
2. Fences, other than swimming pool barriers, not over 7 feet (2134 mm) high.
3. Oil derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not higher than 3 feet (914 mm) measured from finished grade at the bottom of the wall to finished grade at the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids.
5. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons (18 927 L) and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
6. Sidewalks, driveways and on-grade concrete or masonry patios not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above adjacent grade, not requiring guards, and not over any basement or story below and which are not part of an accessible route.

7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work not involving new construction, structural changes or alterations.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Use Group R-3 occupancy, as applicable in Section 101.2, which are equal to or less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons (18 927 L) capacity and are installed entirely above ground.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes and not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment.
12. Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
13. Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not higher than 5 feet 9 inches (1753 mm) and not containing any electrical, plumbing or mechanical equipment.
14. Portable grandstands or bleachers providing seating for fewer than 100 persons when located outside of a building.

Electrical:

1. Minor repairs and maintenance work, including replacement of lamps and fuses or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
2. Electrical equipment used solely for radio and television transmissions, but a permit is required for equipment and wiring for power supply and for the installation of towers and antennas.
3. Temporary testing systems required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

Gas:

1. Portable heating or cooking appliances with a self-contained fuel supply.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
3. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliances with a self-contained fuel supply.
2. Portable ventilation appliances.
3. Portable cooling units.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative coolers.
7. 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.

8. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Plumbing:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe; provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, 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 new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
2. 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.

Tents:

Tents and membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 square feet (37 m²) shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without obtaining a permit from the building official.

Exceptions:

- Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
- Tents open on all sides which comply with all of the following:
 - Individual tents having a maximum size of 700 square feet (65 m²)
 - Multiple tents placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet (3658 mm), with an aggregate area not exceeding 700 square feet (65 m²) total.
 - A minimum clearance of 12 feet (3658 mm) to all other structures and tents.
 - Tents 900 square feet and smaller in total area when occupied by fewer than 50 persons, which have no heating appliances, no installed electrical service and are erected for fewer than 72 hours.

Temporary Structures:

- Structures erected for a period of less than 180 days. Special event structures, tents, umbrella structures and other membrane structures erected for a period of less than 180 days. Those erected for a longer period of time shall comply with the applicable sections of State Building Code.
- Temporary structures that cover an area greater than 120 square feet (11.16 m²), including connecting areas or spaces with a common means of egress or entrance that are used or intended to be used for the gathering together of 10 or more persons, shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without obtaining a permit from the building official.

Signs Exempt from Permits:

- The following signs are exempt from the requirements to obtain a permit before erection:
 - Painted non-illuminated signs. per 2021 IBC §H101.2
 - Temporary signs announcing the sale or rent of property.
 - Signs erected by transportation authorities.
 - Projecting signs not exceeding 2.5 square feet (0.23 m²).
 - The changing of moveable parts of an approved sign that is designed for such changes, or the repainting or repositioning of display matter shall not be deemed an alteration.

Above ground swimming pools exempt from permits:

- **Commercial use** of Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Use Group R-3 occupancy, as applicable in Section 101.2, which are equal to or less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons (18 927 L) capacity and are installed entirely above ground. 2021 IBC §105.2(9)
- **Residential use** of prefabricated swimming pools that are equal to or less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep. 2021 §105.2(7)