



Building and Safety Permit Service Center

This guideline is intended to enhance local consistency in application and enforcement of the California Building and Residential Codes. Application of this guideline is project specific and does not authorize any violation of local or state code, ordinance or law in conjunction with the proposed work.

For applicable zoning requirements contact Land Use Planning at 510-981-7410.

Building and Safety
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PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXEMPTIONS

Permits Required

Pursuant to California Building Code (CBC) Section 105 and California Residential Code (CRC) Section R105, any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by the California Building Standards Code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit.

Work Exempted from Permits

Exemption from permit requirements shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of the California Building Standards Code or any laws or ordinances of the City of Berkeley.

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 120 square feet.
2. Fences not over 7 feet high. (A zoning permit is required for fences over 6 feet high.)
3. Oil derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids.
5. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter/width is not greater than 2:1.
6. Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
12. Window awnings for one and two family dwellings and accessory occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
13. Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.
14. For one and two family dwelling: Decks not exceeding 200 square feet in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve the exit door required by CRC R311.4.

Electrical

1. Listed cord and plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles, but not the outlets therefore.
3. Repair or replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.
4. Installation or maintenance of communications wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment.
5. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
6. Electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions. This exception does not apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installation of towers and antennas.
7. Installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

Mechanical

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by the California Mechanical Code.
5. Replacement of any component part or assembly of an appliance that does not alter its original approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (0.75 kw) or less.
8. Refrigerating equipment that is part of the equipment for which a permit has been issued pursuant to the requirements of this code.
9. A unit refrigerating system.

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 as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in the California Plumbing 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.