

# When are construction permits not required?

**The Minnesota State Building Code identifies the types of construction work that can be done without a permit. The following information is a summary from MN Rules 1300.0120:**

## **Building permits**

### **A building permit is not required:**

- (1) Water tanks not exceeding 5,000 gallons
- (2) Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops, and similar finish work (installation of hard surface floor finishes in apartments, condominium, and other multi-family buildings must comply with sound transmission class (STC) ratings and are not exempt from a permit)
- (3) Window awnings for one or two family dwellings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the wall and do not require additional support
- (4) Movable cases, counter, and partitions not over five feet, nine inches in height
- (5) Installation of insulation in wall cavities when the wall finish is not removed and in unfinished attic floors
- (6) Installation of roof gutter systems (downspouts shall not be directed to adjacent properties)
- (7) Installation of soffit, fascia, trim, and other accessories
- (8) Installation of battery operated or plug-in type smoke and carbon monoxide detectors or the repair or replacement of existing detectors
- (9) The following types of window and door related work are exempt from permits:
  - Installation of storm windows and storm doors
  - Replacement of wood sash for prime windows
  - Installation of vinyl jamb liner weather-stripping for existing window sash
  - Replacement of glass, screens, wood parts, and other minor repairs

The following projects do not require a building permit but **may** require Zoning or Public Works approval:

- (10) Retaining walls not over four feet in height (height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall) unless supporting a surcharge (which may include buildings, pools, parking areas, streets, alleys, sidewalks, or other loads). It is suggested that you have a site plan review even for walls under four feet in height.
- (11) Fences not over seven feet in height
- (12) One-story detached accessory structures not exceeding 200 square feet
- (13) Detached decks and platforms not more than 30 inches above grade that do not provide access to a dwelling
- (14) Sidewalks, walkways, and driveways on private property that are not part of an accessible route
- (15) Prefabricated, above-ground swimming pools not exceeding 5,000 gallons and a 24 inch depth
- (16) Playground equipment

## **Electrical Permits**

**The *Minnesota Electrical Act Subd. 23. Owner.* Defines owner as the following:**

*“An owner is an individual who physically performs electrical work on premises the individual owns and actually occupies as a residence or owns and will occupy as a residence upon completion of its construction.”*

An owner may not do electrical work in any portion of the building that is rented, leased or occupied by others.

## **When is an electrical permit required?**

An electrical permit and electrical inspections are required for any electrical work associated with new construction, remodeling, replacement or repair of electrical wiring, apparatus or equipment. “Electrical work” means the installation, altering, repairing, planning, or laying out electrical wiring, apparatus, or equipment for light, heat, power or other purposes. An electrical permit is required prior to the start of any of the described work above.

## **Who can apply for an electrical permit?**

A licensed, bonded and insured electrical contractor and their employees. When the electrical work is being performed by a homeowner, the homeowner then applies for the permit. In signing and submitting a permit application the homeowner is acknowledging that they own and occupy the home where the work will be performed and they personally and physically will perform all of the electrical work described on the permit application. Homeowners **shall not** obtain permits for another entity who is physically installing the electrical components.

## **Mechanical Permits (includes gas piping, heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning work)**

### **A mechanical permit is not required for:**

- (1) Portable heating, cooking, or clothes drying equipment
- (2) Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment
- (3) Portable fuel cell appliances not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid
- (4) Portable heating, ventilation, or cooling appliances and equipment
- (5) Steam, hot, or chilled water piping within any regulated heating or cooling equipment
- (6) Portable evaporative coolers
- (7) Self-contained refrigeration systems
- (8) Capping an open gas line

## **Plumbing Permits**

Unless the plumbing work poses an unsanitary or hazardous condition, the requirements for a permit is waved for the following plumbing work performed in one- and two-family dwellings,

- (1) The reconnection of an existing water supply line to a replacement appliance that is in like kind and does not involve the replacement or alteration of the existing water supply line.
- (2) Replacement of the internal working components of existing water closets, faucets, or valves.
- (3) Replacement of sink faucets when the work does not include alterations to the existing plumbing piping system; or
- (4) Replacement or resetting of water closets when the work does not include alterations to the existing plumbing piping systems.
- (5) Replacement of a clean-out plug
- (6) Minor repair of broken drain, waste, and vent pipes
- (7) Minor repair of leaking fixtures
- (8) Minor repair of leaking water pipes
- (9) Replacement of a dish washer
- (10) New or replacement of garbage disposals

Additional information regarding plumbing work that may be exempt can be found in the Minnesota Plumbing Code MN Rules Chapter 4715.

## **Emergency Repairs**

Emergency repairs can be done without first obtaining the necessary permits but the permits must be obtained after the work has been completed within a reasonable timeframe.

## **Additional Information**

The information provided is a summary of the Minnesota State Building Code. For a complete description see MN Rules 1300.0120.