



Inspections Department

When do you need a Building permit for residential work?

What you need to know before beginning a project.

Before you start a home renovation project, whether it's a new kitchen, an updated family room or a new sunroom, check to see if you need a building permit. Generally, a building permit is required for ANY construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration costing more than \$20,000. A permit is also required, no matter what the cost, if the work involves the addition, repair or replacement of load bearing members or structures, the addition of plumbing, heating, air conditioning, electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment.

Examples of work requiring a permit:

- Decks, carports, and garages of any size
- Backyard storage buildings exceeding 12 feet in any dimension
- Room additions, finishing an unfinished attic space
- Relocating or installing new light fixtures that adds to the electrical system
- Replacing and reconnecting furnaces, etc.
- Adding to or modifying the heating and air conditioning system
- Adding an additional sink or water closet or modifying the plumbing system
- Replacing a water heater of another type
- Backflow device on landscape irrigation systems
- Kitchen cabinet replacement that changes the configuration or exceeds **\$20,000**
- Structural repair, i.e., floor joists, sub-floor, roof sheathing, headers, piers, footings

What can be done without a permit?

- Repair of non-load bearing components and non-structural repairs
- Replacement of windows and doors if they remain in the same location and are the same size
- Repairing pickets, railings, stair treads and decking on exterior decks, porches, and balconies
- Any plumbing equipment or fixture/fitting replacement which does not change equipment size or system capacity. Includes water and drain lines replacement of same size
- Like-for-like water heater replacement as long as it remains in the same location (to be done by a licensed contractor only)
- Vinyl siding replacement, as long as the total cost doesn't exceed **\$20,000**
- Roofing replacement that does not exceed **\$20,000**, uses the same type of materials and no structural work is performed
- Repair/replacement of dishwashers, disposals, water heaters, electrical devices or light fixtures provided that the work does not include the addition or relocation of wiring (to be done by a licensed contractor only)

When must work be done by a licensed contractor?

Building Contractor Required:

A general contractor licensed in North Carolina must perform all work where the construction cost is in excess of \$30,000. Any person who is paid to manage a project where the construction cost is more than \$30,000 must be a licensed General Contractor. An unlicensed contractor may perform work where the cost is \$30,000 or less. Any person may act as their own general contractor for construction of a home, addition, or accessory structure if they own the land and will personally occupy the structure for 12 months after completion.

Plumbing, Heating, Air Conditioning, and Sprinkler License Contractor Required:

A licensed, plumbing, heating and air conditioning, sprinkler contractor is required to install, alter, replace or relocate plumbing or heating and air conditioning. Homeowners may perform their own plumbing or heating work if they own the land and will personally occupy the structure.

Electrical Contractor License Required:

A licensed electrical contractor is required for all installation, construction, maintenance or repair of electrical wiring, devices, appliances or equipment. Homeowners may perform their own electrical work if they own the land and will personally occupy the structure.