

*St. Louis County Department of Public Works  
Division of Code Enforcement*

**When is a Building Permit required for Commercial Projects?**  
(Commercial includes Multifamily Residential)

**BUILDING CONSTRUCTION WORK**

A Building Permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, reconstruct, repair, move, demolish & replace a building or structure; to convert unfinished space to occupiable rooms; and/or to change the occupancy of a building or portion of a building. Structures include, but are not limited to, retaining walls, fences, above-ground tanks, towers, antennas, flag poles, signs, swimming pools, etc. A building permit is also required to construct, enlarge, alter, or reconstruct a parking lot.

Relative to repair work building permits must be obtained for any repairs that: a.) involve 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, b.) are required as a result of flood, fire, wind or earthquake damage regardless of the extent of damage, and/or c.) are required because of lack of on-going regular maintenance or neglect and involve multiple/elements/components of the building needing to be repaired or replaced in multiple rooms/spaces on the inside of the building and/or to the building exterior to put the building back into good and sound condition.

Except for repairs as noted above the following types of work is considered ordinary repairs or minor work for which a building permit will not be required, provided such ordinary repairs are regularly performed as on-going continued maintenance for the purpose of maintaining the building or structure in good condition:

1. Tuckpointing existing masonry, patching plaster or drywall, painting, floor sanding and refinishing, installing floor tile, installing carpeting (all areas except interior corridors & exit stairs), replacement of flooring with like material, application of wall paper (and other similar wall covering material) over drywall/plaster, and similar cosmetic finish work. Movable cases & counters, most countertop & cabinet installations (except restaurants, bars, mall kiosks, etc);
2. Installing or replacing battery operated smoke detectors in multifamily residential.
3. Repair or replacement of existing gutters and above grade portions of downspouts;
4. Application of pre-finished aluminum or steel (or other like materials) on existing soffits, fascia boards, overhangs, and other similar exterior architectural features;
5. Repair or replacement of existing windows and frames (whenever no modification is made to the rough opening) and/or interior glazing & frames replacements with like materials provided the replacement glass shall meets the safety glazing requirements for new installations.

6. Repair or replacement of exterior and/or interior doors and/or frames, provided the fire rating, when applicable, is maintained (whenever no modification is made to the rough opening);
7. Installing or replacing ceiling tile of any type, other than foam plastic, when applied to existing ceiling surfaces except when within assembly rooms > 300 occupants, institutional room/spaces, and corridors or exit stairways of any use. Replacement of damaged lay-in ceiling panels of like materials up to 25% of a room/space and a maximum of 500 square feet;
8. Repairing or replacing components such as handrails, tread & riser finish boards, guardrail balusters, etc. on existing stairs & decks with like-for-like materials.
9. Installing or replacing exterior siding (vinyl, metal, etc.);
10. Roof covering replacement for roof slopes of 4:12 or more when done with a like material.
11. Foundation and floor slab repair such as patching/filling of cracks (up to 1/4 inch in walls and 3/8 inch in slabs), waterproofing basements, etc provided the building is otherwise structurally sound and plumb;
12. Installing or replacing exterior ramps, stairs and/or steps, which are on grade (and not **more** than 12 inches above the existing grade), not attached to the structure, and within property lines.
13. Installing or replacing concrete patio slabs or wooden patios/decks (for other than outdoor restaurant seating) which rest directly on the ground or a rock base, provided they are not covered by a roof or canopy, are not supported by any type of permanent foundation, and are a maximum of 12 inches above the finished grade;
14. Installing or replacing sidewalks and replacing driveways within property lines;
15. Resealing and/or restriping an existing paved parking lot, provided that the restriping matches the existing configuration and the number of spaces remain the same; (A permit is required to re-strip a parking lot for a new parking space and drive arrangement or configuration)
16. Small retaining walls up to 3 feet in height that do not support a surcharge load and are not located closer to the property line than their vertical height. Walls and associated grading shall not create a change in property elevation along property lines, block drainage or create erosion or damage to adjacent properties (see document titled "When is a Land Disturbance Permit required for Commercial Projects);
17. New fencing or replacement of existing fencing not more than 6 feet in height, except when enclosing public swimming pools. Note: Barbed wire and electrically charged fences of this height are prohibited.
18. Normal residential backyard type playground equipment (including basketball goals & standards) for multifamily complexes, day care centers, etc provided the play area is shown on the approved site development plan. .
19. Radio or television antennae 12 feet or less in height, mounted on the ground (not in the front yard area), attached to or on the roof of a building. Dish antennas 2 feet in diameter or less installed on grade or on the roof, provided such antennae maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance;
20. Small statues on private property, placed on grade without need for a foundation, not attached to or part of a building or structure provided such statues maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance;
21. Relining, repairing, patching and/or shotcreting existing public swimming pool

walls/floors, provided required minimum water depths under diving boards (if present) are maintained.

22. Small accessory structures used for utility/tool or storage sheds, etc. which are 120 square feet or less in area and less than 10 feet in height provided the structure maintains the front yard setback requirements of the County Zoning Code. A permit is required for all structures having unique uses such as BBQ and/or smoke houses, storage of fuel or other hazardous materials, having fuel fired equipment, and other similar uses that present an increased fire hazard or nuisance to adjoining property.

Building Permit list originally consolidated & released 06/01/98. Updated 12/01/02, 06/01/06, & 03/22/10.