

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

When is a Building Permit required for Residential Projects?

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION WORK

A Building Permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish & replace, convert unfinished space to habitable rooms, or change the occupancy of a building or structure or to a portion of a building or structure

Some examples of typical residential construction projects that require a Building Permit are: new house construction, fix-up/rehabilitation repair type projects, room additions, finishing basements, kitchen remodel, bath remodel, garages, carports, porches, decks, patio covers, barns, sheds, retaining walls, swimming pools, fire damage repairs, etc. Refer to the Residential Brochures on our website (www.stlouisco.com/pubworks) for additional information on permit requirements.

With respect to repairs, a Building Permit is required to repair a building or structure that has been damaged from fire, flood, wind, or termites, as well as, to fix-up or rehabilitate a building that has not been maintained in good condition due to lack of on-going maintenance or neglect.

Residential building projects within unincorporated county & contracting municipalities that include electrical, and/or plumbing, and/or mechanical work are issued as an Integrated Building Permit (one permit for the entire job). Electrical work must be done by a licensed electrical contractor or qualifying homeowner, plumbing work by a licensed master plumber or qualifying homeowner, and mechanical work by a licensed or registered financially responsible contractor or qualifying homeowner.

The following types of work are 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 in good condition:

1. Tuckpointing, patching holes in plaster and drywall, painting (interior and exterior), floor sanding and refinishing, installing floor tile and/or carpeting, replacing finish flooring with like material, application of wall paper (and other similar wall covering material), and replacing cabinet units and/or countertops or a vanity in the same location. (Note: Replacing/installing drywall on new or existing room walls, bulkheads, soffits, or ceilings requires a building permit. A plumbing permit is required to replace/reset sinks & water closets and to install dishwashers associated with replacing countertops and/or cabinets or vanities. Reconfiguring kitchen cabinet & bathroom layouts will likely trigger changes to the plumbing piping and code required electrical receptacle locations, as well as, plumbing & electrical permits for the required installations);
2. Repair or replacement of existing gutters and above-grade portions of downspouts;

3. Application of pre-finished aluminum or steel (or other like materials) on existing soffits, fascia boards, overhangs, porch columns & beams, etc.;
4. Replacement or repair of existing windows and frames (whenever no modification is made to the rough opening); installation of storm windows and doors (whenever no modification is made to the rough opening); glazing and glass replacement provided the installation of replacement glass meets the safety glazing requirements for new installations;
5. Replacement or repair of exterior and/or interior doors and/or frames (whenever no modification is made to the rough opening);
6. Exterior ramps, stairs and/or steps, which are on grade (and not more than 12 inches above grade), not structurally attached to the structure, and within property lines. Portable (no foundations) wheelchair ramps providing access to private residences may be more than 12 inches high when the ramp footprint area is 120 square feet or less and the ramp is located behind the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance or is located in the rear or side yard area;
7. On-grade sidewalks and driveways within property lines (a Special Use Permit is required from Highways & Traffic for any sidewalk or driveway work within the right-of-way);
8. On-grade paved areas for single-family residential use (such as a patio, parking spaces, shooting area for a basketball goal, etc), on the same lot as the primary structure, without roofs, covers or enclosures;
9. Concrete patio slabs or wooden patios/decks 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;
10. Some retaining walls up to 3 feet in height that do not support a surcharge load and are not located in close proximity to a property line (see Residential Retaining Wall Brochure for specifics on when a permit is required). 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 Residential Projects);
11. Fixed or retractable awnings installed on windows & doors which do not project into the front yard setback as required by the County Zoning Ordinance;
12. Wall paneling & wallpaper of any type when applied to existing residential room wall surfaces;
13. Ceiling tile of any type, other than foam plastic, when applied to existing residential ceiling surfaces. Replacement of damaged lay-in ceiling panels of like materials up to 25% of a room/space and a maximum of 500 square feet;
14. Installation of battery operated smoke detectors within existing dwellings/dwelling units;
15. Small accessory building/structures used for utility/tool or storage sheds, cabanas, play houses, 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 Ordinance. (Note: This does not include small accessory building/structures having unique uses such as BBQ and/or smoke houses, storage of fuel or other hazardous materials, having fuel fired equipment, and other uses that present an increased fire hazard or a potential nuisance to adjoining property. A permit is required for all buildings/structures housing these types of uses regardless of size.)
16. Residential accessory structures such as; clothes poles, arbors, garden trellises and other

similar minor structures, provided such accessory structures maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance;

17. Basketball goals and standards;
18. Normal manufactured backyard playground equipment for residential property provided such equipment maintains the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance. (Note: This does not include large unique or unusual structures such as; playhouses, skateboard ramps, batting cages, etc. A permit is require for these types of structures);
19. Swimming pools having a wall height less than 26 inches and less than 24 inches of water, and hot tubs & spas placed on a slab-on-grade, provided such structures maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance. (Note: All other swimming pools including inflatable pools, hot tubs, & spas require a building permit);
20. Goldfish pools, lily pad pools and other similar residential water landscaping type features not intended for bathing purposes and located on private property; provide such features maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance. (Note: Some retaining walls require a building permit, see Item 10 above);
21. Roof covering replacement for roof slopes of 4:12 or more when done with a like material. Replacement of 25% or less of the roof sheathing with like material. (Note: A building permit is required to shingle or install other roof coverings on roof slopes less than 4:12 and on roof slopes of 4:12 or more when re-roofing with different materials);
22. New exterior siding (vinyl, metal, masonite, etc.);
23. New fencing or replacement of existing fencing (except when enclosing swimming pools, spas, or hot tubs) in the rear or side yards provided the fence is no more than 6 feet in height. Fencing on a corner cannot be located within the County Zoning Ordinance site distance triangle (Note: A permit is required for fences around swimming pools, spas, or hot tubs, and for all fences more than 6 feet in height);
24. Radio or television antennae 12 feet or less in height, mounted on the ground, attached to or on the roof of a building. Dish antennas 2 feet in diameter or less installed on grade or on the roof. All antennae must maintain the front yard setback required by the County Zoning Ordinance;
25. Minor cosmetic repairs (including minor smoke/fire damage, termite, wind, etc.) to a building when the building official that the work is of a minor cosmetic nature and there is no structural damage or change to any part of the building structure. A field inspection is required in advance to determine the nature of the repair.
26. Resealing and/or restriping existing paved parking areas, provided that the restriping done matches the existing configuration and the number of spaces remain the same;
27. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes;
28. 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;
29. 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., including underpinning of slabs and foundation wall, provided the existing building is otherwise structurally sound;
30. Relining, repairing, patching and/or shotcreting existing swimming pool walls/floors, provided required minimum water depths under diving boards (if present) are maintained.
31. Repairing or replacing door or window hardware including locks and latches;

32. Repairing or replacing handrails, guardrails, treads & riser finish boards on existing interior stairs;
33. Repairing or replacing existing finish decking material & guardrails on exterior decks or porches with like material and handrails, treads & riser finish boards on existing exterior stairs with like material. (Note: a building permit is required to replace a deck or porch, to replace deck/porch joists, beams, and/or columns, to replace the finish decking or guardrail with a different material such as replacing wood with plastic or composite products, and/or to replace an entire exterior stair);
34. Increasing attic insulation or installing exterior wall insulation under new siding.

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When is an Electrical Permit required for Residential Projects?

ELECTRICAL WORK

An Electrical Permit is required to install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace equipment, panels, material, wiring, fixtures or any other component of an electrical system.

Some examples of typical residential electrical projects that require an Electrical Permit are: new house construction, enlarging or renovating a house, remodeling kitchens or bathrooms, finishing basements, replacing the service entrance, replacing/enlarging distribution/breaker panels, adding new circuits, adding new wiring/fixtures to existing circuits, installing a swimming pool, installing electric to an accessory structure, etc. Refer to the Residential Brochures on our website (www.stlouisco.com/pubworks) for additional information on permit requirements.

Residential building projects within unincorporated county & contracting municipalities that include electrical work are issued as an Integrated Building Permit (one permit for the entire job). Electrical work must be done by a licensed electrical contractor or qualifying homeowner.

The following types of work are considered ordinary repairs or minor work for which an Electrical Permit will not be required:

1. Replacing defective fuses, switches, receptacles, light fixtures and changing/replacing existing receptacles with GFCI type receptacles within existing pre-wired boxes (Reconfiguring kitchen cabinet & bathroom layouts will likely trigger code required changes to electrical receptacle locations and associated new wiring. An electrical permit is required to install new wiring);
2. Replacing defective garbage disposals, dishwashers, kitchen & bathroom exhaust fans like-for-like in the same location provided they can be connected to existing wiring without modifications;
3. Installing a ceiling fan at an existing light outlet location provided the existing box is replaced by an approved box for fan installations and is securely anchored to the ceiling framing above. (Note: New wiring requires an electrical permit.);
4. Installing a low voltage communication system, security/alarm system, or other low voltage wiring within existing one & two family dwellings;
5. Installing or replacing landscape lighting plugged into an existing approved exterior outlet or powered by the sun.

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When is a Plumbing Permit required for Residential Projects?

PLUMBING WORK

A Plumbing Permit is required to install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace equipment, potable water supply and distribution piping, fixtures & traps, drainage & vent pipes, building drains and sewers including laterals, including their respective joints and connection, devices, receptors, and appurtenances or any other component of a plumbing system.

Some examples of typical residential plumbing projects that require a Plumbing Permit are: new house construction, plumbing work associated with remodeling, renovating or enlarging a house, resetting/relocating plumbing fixtures associated with remodeling kitchens or bathrooms, installing bathrooms, bar sinks, or other plumbing associated with finishing basements, repairing or replacing the water distribution piping, building drain/waste piping, or vent system, replacing a water heater, installing/replacing a backflow device for a lawn irrigation system, etc. Refer to the Residential Brochures on our website (www.stlouisco.com/pubworks) for additional information on permit requirements.

Residential building projects within unincorporated county & contracting municipalities that include plumbing work are issued as an Integrated Building Permit (one permit for the entire job). Plumbing work must be done by a licensed master plumber or qualifying homeowner.

The following types of work are considered ordinary repairs or minor work for which a Plumbing Permit will not be required:

1. Minor repairs within the interior of any building to leaks in drains, pipes, traps and valves, opening waste or supply pipes, and traps or drains. (Note: Minor repairs shall not be construed to include any work involving connections to or replacement or rearrangement of soil pipes, supply pipes, waste pipes, vent pipes or inside rain leader pipes, or the replacing or setting of any fixture, or replacement or repairs to Backflow Prevention Devices, pressure reducing or regulating valves. A permit is required for this kind of repair work.);
2. Replacing internal components within a water closet tank such as a defective flush valve, float, stopper/flapper, replacing internal components such as washers on a faucet or hose bib, replacing defective TPR valves on water heaters, and replacing treaded hose bibs;
3. Replacing a kitchen or bathroom faucet or garbage disposal in the same location provided no additional repair work is required beyond the fixture tubing connections or disposal waste connections. (Note: A plumbing permit is required to replace and/or reset fixtures such as kitchen sinks, water closets, bathroom sinks, tubs, or showers, or to replace/install dishwashers as part of simple kitchen & bathroom remodels, as well as, to

extend/modify the water supply piping and/or trap arm & waste/drain piping to accommodate reconfigured kitchen cabinet or bathroom layouts on more complex kitchen or bathroom remodels, etc.);

4. Installing a lawn irrigation system beyond the required backflow device (Note: A plumbing permit is required for the installation of the required backflow device).

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When is a Mechanical Permit required for Residential Projects?

MECHANICAL WORK

A Mechanical Permit is required to install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace equipment, ductwork, or any other component of a mechanical system.

Some examples of typical residential mechanical projects that require a Mechanical Permit are: new house construction, installing/replacing heating & air conditioning equipment associated with enlarging or renovating a house or finishing basements, replacing existing furnaces and/or air conditioning units, adding new ductwork, replacing or rerouting ductwork, installing kitchen hoods &/or fans associated with remodeling kitchens, installing pre-fab fireplaces, gas logs &/or gas log lighters, installing wood burning stoves, installing outdoor gas grills or gas lights, installing/replacing gas piping, etc. Refer to the Residential Brochures on our website (www.stlouisco.com/pubworks) for additional information on permit requirements.

Residential building projects within unincorporated county & contracting municipalities that include mechanical work are issued as an Integrated Building Permit (one permit for the entire job). Mechanical work must be done by a licensed or registered financially responsible contractor or qualifying homeowner.

The following types of work shall be considered as ordinary repairs or minor work for which a Mechanical Permit will not be required:

1. Installing, replacing, or repairing portable heating appliances, portable ventilation appliances and equipment, portable cooling units, portable evaporative coolers, and portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid;
2. Replacing or repairing steam, hot water or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliance;
3. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter the approval of equipment or an appliance or make such equipment or appliance unsafe;
4. Installing, replacing, or repairing self-contained refrigeration systems that contain 10 pound (4.5 kg) or less of refrigerant, or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (0.75 kw) or less.
5. Ordinary repairs for the purpose of maintenance and service. This includes items such as the repair or replacement of any minor part of a piece of equipment that does not alter the approval of the equipment, the replacement of piping within heating or cooling equipment, replacement of leading or defective valves, fittings or connections of system components, changing of belts, parts, filters and lubrication of equipment, recharging, testing and

balancing of equipment and similar service work. (Note: All other repairs and replacements to mechanical systems and equipment requires a permit);

6. Replacing existing residential kitchen hoods, kitchen & bathroom exhaust fans and associated ductwork provided they are of the same nominal capacity, same type and in same location. (Note: A permit is required for new installations of residential kitchen hoods and kitchen & bath exhaust fans including associated ductwork.);
7. Replacing like-for-like decorative gas log appliances (within existing masonry fireplaces or pre-fab fireplaces listed for gas log inserts), gas-fired lighters, and permanent residential outside gas grills, outdoor gaslights, and similar gas appliances. (Note: A permit is required for new installation of these kind of gas appliances and associated gas supply lines);
8. Replacing floor register and wall & ceiling diffuser covers;
9. Replacing vent connectors (Note: A permit is required to replace the flue);
10. Replacing dryer exhaust piping in the same location.