

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

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

**LAND DISTURBANCE WORK**

A Land Disturbance Permit is required for any clearing, rough grading (cutting and/or filling), excavating, finish grading, or any related work, which reshapes the ground surface or otherwise results in the removal and/or destruction of natural vegetation and/or results in the ground surface being exposed.

The following work does not need a Land Disturbance Permit (see caution comment at end):

1. Any emergency activity that is immediately necessary for the protection of life, property, or natural resources.
2. Existing farming, nursery and agricultural operations conducted as a permitted or accessory use.
3. Land disturbance activities involving less than thirty (30) cubic yards of earth/soil moved and less than 2000 square feet of disturbed area provided the Land Disturbance Activity is for the improvement of the property. Erosion and sediment control measures shall be provided when necessary, until grass or other vegetation is established.
4. Removal of existing or dying grass or similar vegetation by disturbing not more than 10,000 square feet and re-sodding or re-seeding with new grass or landscaping to include preparation of the seed bed; provided erosion and sediment control measures are provided until the grass or other vegetation is established. Any cut or fill in conjunction with the preparation of the seedbed shall not exceed thirty (30) cubic yards.

**Caution:** It is a violation of the Land Disturbance Code to:

- a. do any cut or fill at the property line without construction plans being approved by the County and the proposed work authorized by a permit,
- b. do any cut or fill that would permanently divert one drainage area to another,
- c. do any cut or fill which would deposit mud or harmful silt, or create erosion or damage to adjoining properties, or
- d. do any cut or fill that would block or offset an existing swale or drainage path in a manner to cause damming and ponding.
- e. do any cut or fill within a flood plain without a flood plain study and grading plan being approved by the County and the proposed work authorized by permit.

For additional information on land disturbance permit & inspection requirements visit our website at [www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks](http://www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks).

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**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.

For additional information on building permit & inspection requirements visit our website at [www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks](http://www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks).

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**When is an Electrical Permit required for Commercial Projects?  
(Commercial includes Multifamily Residential)**

**ELECTRICAL WORK**

An Electrical Permit is required for any work of installing, erecting, or altering material, wiring, fixtures, or other apparatus to be used for the generation, transmission or utilization of electricity or communications equipment or on structures or premises.

For additional information on electrical permit & inspection requirements visit our website at [www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks](http://www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks).

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

**PLUMBING WORK**

A Plumbing Permit is required for the following work: a.) any plumbing or drainlaying, except minor repairs as noted below, in, upon, or about any building or premise, whether private or public; b.) any connection to any sewer; c.) the installation or replacement or permanent removal of any backflow prevention device or assembly; and/or d.) the connection of any dedicated fire suppression water main to any potable water main.

Plumbing Systems include, but are not limited to, all potable water building supply and distribution pipes, all plumbing fixtures and traps, all drainage and vent pipes, and all building drains and building sewers, including their respective joints and connection, devices, receptors, and appurtenances within the property lines of the premises and shall include potable water piping, potable water treating or using equipment, and water heaters and boilers for potable water.

The following types of work are considered minor repairs for which a Plumbing Permit will not be required or is otherwise exempted from permit:

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, or any other installation, repair or alteration which in the judgment of the Chief Plumbing Inspector is of such a nature which if improperly installed, repaired or altered would endanger a the public health. A plumbing permit is required for any of this kind of repair work.);
2. Installing a lawn irrigation system beyond the required backflow prevention device (Note: A plumbing permit is required for the installation of the required backflow prevention device).
3. Work on any storm or sanitary sewer accepted for maintenance by Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, Municipal Street Department, or County Highway Department.

For additional information on plumbing permit & inspection requirements visit our website at [www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks](http://www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks).

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

**MECHANICAL WORK**

A Mechanical Permit is required to erect, install, enlarge, alter, reconstruct, repair, remove, convert, or replace a mechanical system.

Mechanical systems are composed of components, devices, appliances, and equipment and include, but are not limited to, heating and/or air-conditioning systems, refrigeration systems, exhaust systems, piping systems, duct systems, venting systems, hydronic systems and ventilation systems.

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

1. 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);
2. 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;
3. Replacing or repairing steam, hot water or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliance;
4. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter the approval of equipment or an appliance or make such equipment or appliance unsafe;
5. 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.

For additional information on mechanical permit & inspection requirements visit our website at [www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks](http://www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks).