

## WHEN IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

### Building permit required:

- The construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement to another site, removal, demolition or change of occupancy type of any building unless specifically exempted... or
- Work specifically not exempted from the \$15,000 permit threshold.

### Building permit not required:

- The construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration performed in accordance with the current edition of the North Carolina State Building Code and costing fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or less in any single family residence or farm building unless the work involves any of the following:
  - The addition, repair or replacement of load bearing structures. However, no permit is required for replacements of windows, doors, exterior siding, or the pickets, railings, stair treads, and decking of porches and exterior decks.
  - The addition (excluding replacement) of roofing.

### Plumbing permit required:

- A plumbing permit is required for installation, extension, relocation, replacement or general repair of any plumbing system unless specifically exempted.

### Plumbing permit not required:

- Replacement of water heaters in one- or two-family dwellings, provided:
  - The energy use rate or thermal input is no greater than that of the water heater being replaced.
  - There is no change in fuel, energy source, location, routing or sizing of venting and piping.
  - The work is performed by a licensed plumbing contractor and installed in accordance with the current edition of the North Carolina State Building Code.

...or

- The construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration performed in accordance with the current edition of the North Carolina State Building Code and costing fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) or less in any single-family residence or farm building unless the work involves the addition or change in the design of plumbing or the use of materials not permitted by the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings. However, no permit is

required for replacements otherwise meeting the requirements of this subsection that do not change size or capacity.

**Mechanical permit required:**

- For installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any heating or cooling equipment system.

**Electrical permit required:**

- For installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment.

**Electrical permit not required:**

- In any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit shall not be required for repair or replacement of electrical lighting fixtures or devices, such as receptacles and lighting switches, or for the connection of an existing branch circuit to an electric water heater that is being replaced, provided that all of the following requirements are met:
  - With respect to electric water heaters, the replacement water heater is placed in the same location and is of the same or less capacity and electrical rating as the original.
  - With respect to electrical lighting fixtures and devices, the replacement is with a fixture or device having the same voltage and the same or less amperage.
  - The work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-43.
  - The repair or replacement installation meets the current edition of the State Building Code, including the State Electrical Code.

**Common scenarios for single-family structures where a permit is required:**

- Adding a window or door (structural).
- Removing a non-load bearing wall. Permit exemption language make no mention of reconstruction or demolition. It only refers to construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration.
- Adding a disappearing staircase (structural).
- Adding an outside deck (structural).
- Kitchen and bathroom remodels if the project cost exceeds \$15,000 or it involve the addition or change in design of both plumbing and the addition, replacement or change in design of electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment.
- Replacing a water heater when converting from an electric water heater to a gas water heater or vice-versa, or if the owner who replaces a water heater without using an appropriately licensed contractor to install the replacement.
- Replacing steps (not stair treads) to a porch/deck (structural).
- Adding a water purification system (installation/addition of a new system).

- Adding a light fixture or receptacle.
- Installing a ceiling fan to junction box because electrical boxes are “approved” or “listed” as appropriate for various applications. The proposed ceiling fan to be added or installed as a replacement may weigh more than the junction box is approved to handle, therefore the installation/replacement must be verified as Code compliant by an inspector.
- Adding an attic fan (because it involves electrical wiring and devices).
- Extending or adding roofing.
- Replacing roof portions if the replacement roof does not have the same fire resistance grade, or if the cost exceeds \$15,000.
- Replacing/adding an HVAC system.

**Common scenarios for single-family structures where a permit is not required:**

- Replacing a window or door as long as no structural changes, such as increasing the openings, occur.
- Replacing siding or trim with similar grade, unless the cost exceeds \$15,000.
- Replacing a toilet as long as the replacement is connected to the existing lines and there is no installation, extension or general repair of the plumbing system itself.
- Replacing a water heater as long as the work is done by a licensed contractor who installs the replacement pursuant to current State Building Code requirements, the replacement is of the same or lesser capacity and energy usage as the predecessor, and there is no change in fuel, energy source, location, or the routing or sizing of venting and piping.
- Replacing a light fixture/receptacle as long as the replacement is with a fixture/device having the same voltage and the same or less amperage so long as the work is performed by a licensed electrical contractor who installs it according to current Code requirements.
- Adding insulation to a crawl space or attic. It does not involve the construction, alteration, repair, etc, of a building, nor does it affect any plumbing, HVAC or electrical system.
- Replacing roof portions as long as the replacement has the same fire resistance grade and the total cost does not exceed \$15,000.
- Minor repairs/replacements to HVAC system involving parts that don’t change the energy source, fuel type, or routing or sizing of venting or piping, such as compressors, coils, motors, contactors or capacitors may not require a permit.
- Installing/replacing floors (hardwood, carpet, etc.), new wallpaper, window treatments, etc. This does not constitute repair, construction, or alteration to the building itself nor does it typically affect plumbing, HVAC or electrical systems.