



# DO I NEED A PERMIT FOR MY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT?



This handout provides general information about the types of work that require a permit, and those that do not. As the owner of a one or two family dwelling you can hire a licensed contractor to get the proper permits and complete work or you can obtain permits and do some of the work yourself.

## Why do I need permits?

It's the law. Municipal building code requires that permits be obtained for certain types of work. AMC 23.10.104

Permits protect you, your family, the general public and your investment. (They are designed to help ensure licensed contractors do the work when required.)

Inspections ensure work is done safely and it meets the minimum code requirements.

Minor problems could lead to costly repairs, liability and life/safety issues can be detected during permitting, plan review, inspections and brought to your attention before the situation worsens.

When selling a property, the buyer, realtor and/or lender may require unpermitted work be corrected, properly permitted and inspected before closing. Work done without a permit may require substantial corrections or complete removal to comply with codes.

## Where can I get a permit?

In the Building Safety Division at the first floor kiosk at 4700 Elmore Road.

## Hours:

Monday—Friday

9:00 am—5:00 pm

No new applications accepted after 4 pm.

Building Safety 343-8211  
Development Svcs 343-8301  
Visit our Web site: [www.muni.org/building](http://www.muni.org/building)

## One and Two Family Residential Dwelling

Permits are required for many types of work you may need or desire to have done on your property. Listed in this handout is work requiring and not requiring permits. This information is not all inclusive, so when in doubt about a permitting need please check with Building Safety staff in the Planning and Development Center.

## Permit Requirements Inside and Outside of the Building Safety Service Area

The Anchorage Building Safety Area (BSSA) consists of the area formerly known as the City of Anchorage, the area of the Greater Anchorage Area Borough formerly known as Service Area 30, the Glenn Heights Area and the Evenson Service Area. If in doubt, consult the map for Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) 27.30.040. Different rules apply for multi-families and commercial buildings.

## Work requiring a Land Use permit

Land use permits are required in land use areas, outside of the BSSA. AMC 21.03.100, requires a land use permit for the following:

- Construction of any building whose floor area is 200 square feet or greater, which includes exterior remodeling and additions
- Placement or relocation of a structure on a lot
- To change the principal use of building, as defined by "change of use".
- To change the number of dwelling units on a lot
- For excavation of 300 cubic feet or more (11.11 cubic yards)
- Fill or grading of 900 cubic feet on any lot or tract (33.33 cubic yards)
- Mechanical clearing of vegetation of 1 acre or more

## Work requiring a building permit in the BSSA (per AMC 23.10.104)

- Build a one or two family dwelling
- Build, demolish or add a room, garage, shed, or other enclosed structure attached to a house
- Add or enlarge a porch cover, patio cover, carport or other open-sided roofed structure that is attached to a house
- Enclose a patio cover, porch or carport
- Finish an attic, garage or basement to create living space
- Cut new window or door opening, or enlarge the size of existing openings
- Move, remove or add walls
- Build or replace an exterior stairway more than 4 risers high
- Build a deck more than 30 inches high and surrounding grade 3 feet out
- Import more than 50 cubic yards of materials
- Poured concrete over any story or basement

**Emergency Repairs:** Where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed after hours in an emergency situation, the contractor shall call the Building Safety Hotline (343-8300) before commencing the work. The permit application shall be submitted within the next working business day. (AMC 23.10.104.1.1)

## Please note:

Regardless of whether a building permit is required, the project must meet the [Title 21 Zoning Code](#) requirements. Call 907-343-8211 for more information.

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## Requirement for Licensed Contractors and Owner/Occupant

For all construction, renovation, structural, plumbing, mechanical, or electrical work regulated by AMC Title 23, the work must be done by a contractor licensed by the Municipality of Anchorage in the relevant trade. AMC 23.10.105.1. MOA licensing can be confirmed on either the Building Safety Division website (<http://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/development/BSD/Pages/ContractorLicensing.aspx>), or calling the Building Safety Division at (907-343-8211).

## Owner Occupant Exception to Licensed Contractor Requirement

You must be both the owner and occupant of a residential property in order to do electrical, plumbing, mechanical, or structural work yourself. If the property is intended for sale, lease, rent or exchange in the near future, the work must be done by a licensed contractor. AMC 23.10.105.1

## Work requiring an electrical permit (AMC 23.10.104.1 & 23.10.104.2.)

A permit is required to:

- Install new, extend or replace 120/240 volt wiring
- Change or upgrade an electrical panel
- Change or replace utility service (If power has been disconnected, a permit and inspection are required to energize service)
- Low voltage installation other than communications, phone, or class II control and signal wiring

## Work Not requiring an electrical permit

- Portable motors or other portable appliances energized by means of a cord or cable having an attachment plug end to be connected to an approved receptacle when the cord or cable is permitted by the Electrical Code.
- B. Repair or replacement of fixed motors, transformers or fixed approved appliances of the same type and rating in the same location.
- C. Temporary decorative lighting.
- D. Repair or replacement of current-carrying parts of any switch, contactor or control device.
- E. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles, but not the outlets.
- F. Repair or replacement of any overcurrent device of the required capacity in the same location.
- G. Repair or replacement of electrodes or transformers of the same size and capacity in the same location.
- H. Removal of electrical wiring.
- I. Temporary wiring for experimental purposes in suitable experimental laboratories.
- J. Wiring for temporary theater, motion picture or television stage sets.
- K. Low-energy power, controls and signal circuits of Class II and Class III as defined in the Electrical Code.

- L. Installation, alteration or repair of electrical wiring, apparatus or equipment or the generation, transmission, distribution or metering of electrical energy or in the operation of signals or the transmission of intelligence by a public or private utility in the exercise of its function as a serving utility.
- M. The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but shall apply to equipment and wiring for power supply, the installations of towers and antennas.
- N. Installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

## Work requiring a mechanical permit (AMC 23.10.104.1 & 23.10.104.2.3)

- Install or change any part of heating or cooling system which has duct work or must be vented into any kind of chimney or vent
- Install, alter or repair gas piping between the meter and an appliance (indoors and outdoors)
- Installing a fuel oil tank tanks and associated piping.

## Work requiring a plumbing permit (AMC 23.10.104.1)

- Replace, relocate or add to the piping system within your home
- Install new plumbing fixtures such as toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, dishwashers, etc
- Replace a water heater
- Replacing, relocating existing plumbing fixtures, any concealed traps, drain piping, vent piping, or water piping that becomes defective and necessary to be removed and replaced.
- Install rain drains, cesspools, septic systems, drywells, sewer lines, waterlines, swimming pools, backflow prevention assemblies for lawn sprinkler systems or capping sewer systems.
- There must be an adult over age 18 to let the inspector inside.

Note: Adding a bathroom not only requires a plumbing permit but may also require a building, electrical and/or mechanical permit depending upon the scope of work.

## Work Not Requiring a plumbing permit (AMC 23.10.104.2.4)

- A. The stopping of leaks in drains, soils, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, should any concealed trap, drain pipe, soil, waste or vent pipe become defective and necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, the same shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be procured and inspection made as provided in this code.
- B. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, nor for the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.
- C. The replacement of a hose bibb, drinking fountain, wash fountain, sink or lavatory, including the faucet, provided such replacement does not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of piping other than a trap or trap arm.
- D. The replacement of a water closet, bidet or urinal, including the flushometer valve, provided such replacement does not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of piping.
- E. The replacement of an electric water heater in a single-family or duplex dwelling unit, provided such replacement does not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of piping.

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## Work not requiring a building permit for the following (AMC 23.10.104.2.1):

- A. One-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet.
- B. Fences of light-frame construction not over eight feet high.
- C. Oil derricks.
- D. An isolated retaining wall where the retained height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the retained soil at the face of the wall is not more than 4 feet and the top of the wall above the retained soil is not more than one foot. Multiple walls, separated by terraces to form an aggregate wall height greater than 4 feet are also exempt where the clear distance between the back face of the lower wall and the front face of the upper wall is greater than two times the retained height of soil of the lower wall.
- E. Water tanks supported directly upon grade, if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2.1.
- F. Platforms, walks, ramps and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement or story below.
- G. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
- H. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
- I. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R, Division 3 Occupancy, less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons and installed entirely above ground.
- J. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support of Group R-3, and Group U occupancies.
- K. Movable cases, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches high.
- L. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes and not including service systems.
- M. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to one- and two-family dwellings.
- N. Construction site job shacks and fences on legally permitted construction sites.
- O. Storage racks not over six feet high.
- P. Artwork six or less feet tall, where the center of gravity of the structure falls below the mid-height of the structure.
- Q. Grave markers. structure.

- R. Roof antennas not mechanically anchored where the existing roof structure and stability are checked by a civil engineer licensed in the State of Alaska.
- S. Replacement of windows and doors where the rough opening is not enlarged.
- T. Repair or replacement of exterior wall coverings and roof coverings where the total cost of the repair or replacement using fair market value of materials and labor does not exceed \$5,000.
- U. Repair or replacement of gypsum wall board wall and ceiling finish material where the total cost of the repair and replacement using fair market value of materials and labor does not exceed \$5,000. This exception does not apply to code required fire resistive wall, floor and ceiling assemblies.
- V. Temporary structures erected for less than 15 days.

**Unless otherwise exempted by this code, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits shall be required for the above items.**

## Scheduling an inspection

- Call 343-8300, the BSD 24-hour inspection request line
- Please give us your permit number, physical address, name, phone number where you can be reached during the weekday and if you want the inspection in the morning or afternoon.