Building Permits
When Required, When Not Required

The following excerpts are taken from the 2011 Anchorage Administrative Code, AMC Chapter 23.10.

**When is a building permit required?**

23.10.104.1 Permits required. Any owner or authorized agent intending to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building, structure or portion thereof, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit unless work is specifically exempted by this code.

**When is a permit not required?**

23.10.104.2 Work exempt from permit. Exemptions from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of the Municipality. See the following list for exempted work:

23.10.104.2.1 Building permit exemptions. A building permit shall not be required for the following:

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 not over eight feet high.

C. Oil derricks.

D. Retaining walls supporting materials with up to four (4) feet in differential height measured from the top of grade on both sides of wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids.

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 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 (1372 mm) 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. Permits shall not be required for ordinary maintenance and/or non-structural repair on a building or structure in Groups R-3 and U occupancies. Ordinary maintenance of a building or structure shall not include the cutting away or addition of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal of any structural beam or bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure; nor shall ordinary maintenance include additions to, alterations of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste vent or similar piping, electrical wiring, mechanical or other work affecting public health or safety. All ordinary maintenance and/or non-structural repair shall be made only in accordance with the applicable provisions of the building code, and other construction or safety codes of the municipality.

M. No building permit shall be required for nonstructural work up to and including $5,000 total construction valuation, including the combination of all building construction, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and structural work. Total construction includes all work (as if contracted out) to
complete the project and occupy the structure. This exemption does not affect the need for electrical, plumbing, mechanical and structural permits if electrical, plumbing, mechanical or structural work is done.

N. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes and not including service systems.

O. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to one- and two-family dwellings.

P. Construction site job shacks and fences on legal permitted construction sites.

Q. Storage racks not over six (6) feet high.

R. Artwork six (6) or less feet tall.

S. Grave markers.

T. Roof antennas not mechanically anchored where the existing roof structure and stability are checked by a civil engineer licensed in the State of Alaska.

U. Replacement of windows and doors where the rough opening is not enlarged.


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

23.10.104.2.2 Electrical permit exemptions. An electrical permit shall not be required for the following:

A. 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 over-current 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. Taping joints.

I. Removal of electrical wiring.

J. Temporary wiring for experimental purposes in suitable experimental laboratories.

K. Wiring for temporary theater, motion picture or television stage sets.

L. Low-energy power, controls and signal circuits of Class II and Class III as defined in the Electrical Code.

M. 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.

N. 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.

O. Installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

23.10.104.2.3 Mechanical permit exemptions. A mechanical permit shall not be required for the following:

A. A portable heating appliance.

B. Portable ventilation appliances and equipment.

C. A portable cooling unit.

D. A portable evaporative cooler.

E. Steam, hot water or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliance regulated by the Mechanical Code.
F. The replacement of any minor part that does not alter the approval of equipment or appliance or make such equipment or appliance unsafe.
G. Self-contained refrigeration system containing ten pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of one horsepower or less.
H. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

23.10.104.2.4 Plumbing permit exemptions. A plumbing permit shall not be required for the following:
A. The stopping of leaks in drains, soil, 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.

Questions may be directed to a permit technician or plan reviewer at 343-8211.

Ron Thompson, P.E. Acting Building Official
Date: 09/10/14
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