

This bulletin contains information about some types of building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work on commercial projects that do not require a building permit. Work exempt from a commercial permit must still comply with applicable Building Codes, State of California Codes, city policies and standards, and all other applicable ordinances.

NOTE: Exemptions from permit requirements shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

Building:

1. Other than storm shelters, one-story detached accessory buildings or structures, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet and the building or structure is entirely above grade and is not located on a maintenance easement, on a public utilities easement, or within a setback area as required by any local ordinance or other applicable law. The building or structure shall not exceed the height requirements set forth in any local ordinance or other applicable law. It is permissible that these buildings or structures still be regulated by Part 7 California Wildland Urban-Interface Code, despite exemption from permit.
2. Fences, other than swimming pools, not over six feet high.
3. Oil derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not over four feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II, or IIIA liquids.
5. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2:1.
6. Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops, and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion pictures, music, television, and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are not greater than 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground. (Swimming pool barriers still require a permit.)
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to buildings and structures of this code.
12. Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
13. Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters, and partitions not over 5'9".
14. Skateboard ramps. (Refer to zoning code for placement and height restrictions.)

Electrical:

1. Radio and transmitting stations. Equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installations of towers and antennas require a permit.
2. Temporary testing systems.
3. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

Gas:

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.

Plumbing:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
2. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliances, ventilation equipment, cooling units, and evaporative cooler.
2. Replacement of any parts that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
3. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment.
4. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 lbs. or less of refrigerant.

If you are unsure about the specific permit exemptions for your project, it is recommended that you contact the Building Division at 442-339-2719 or by email at building@carlsbadca.gov or visit the [Building Division webpage](#) for more information.