



Work Exempt from Permit - Excerpted from 2025 California Residential Code and Building Code (§R105.2)

Work exempt from permit.

Exemptions from permit requirements of this code 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. Permits shall not be required for the following:

Building:

1. One-story detached accessory structures, provided that the floor area *does not exceed* 120 square feet. It is permissible that these structures still be regulated by Section 710A, despite exemption from permit.
2. Fences not over 7 feet high.
3. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
4. Water tanks supported directly on grade if the capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) and the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2:1.
5. Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches (762 mm). *
6. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
7. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
8. Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) and are installed entirely above ground.
9. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
10. Swings and other playground equipment.
11. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
12. Decks not exceeding 200 square feet in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling or townhouse and do not serve the exit door required by Section R318.4).

Electrical:

1. Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets therefor.

3. Replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.

4. Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.

Gas:

1. Portable heating, cooking, or clothes drying appliance.
2. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

Mechanical:

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment or cooling units.
3. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
4. Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.
5. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
6. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds (4.54 kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (0.75 kW) or less.

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 that such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.

[A]105.2.1 Emergency repairs.

Where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted within the next working business day to the building official.

*See reverse for pertinent City of Albany regulations.

City of Albany Regulations Relevant to Permit-Exempt Work

Fences: Albany's Zoning Ordinance (AMC Section 20.24.110) limits fences in residential zones to 6 ft. in most cases. See the informational handout, "Regulations for Fences, Wall & Hedges" for further information. Note that it is the property owner's responsibility to locate property lines and identify areas subject to 3 ft. height restrictions.

Sidewalks: Replacement of sidewalks and driveway approaches in the public right-of-way requires an Encroachment Permit. By Community Development Department policy, such Permits are only issued to licensed contractors.

Community Development Department - (510) 528-5760