



**City of El Cajon**  
**Building and Fire Safety Division**  
200 Civic Center Way  
El Cajon, CA 92020  
Phone: (619) 441-1726

## When Do I Need a Permit?

The question of when a building permit is required can sometimes be confusing. This is because the codes approach the question from a different perspective. The codes list those items that are **Not** required to have a permit (a much smaller list) rather than those items which are required to have a permit. The following items are **Not** required to have a building permit.

1. A one story detached accessory buildings used as a tool or storage shed, a playhouse or similar use, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 sq. ft. and when erected as accessory to a single family dwelling on the same property.
2. Fences not over 7 feet high.
3. Oil derricks.
4. Movable cases, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches high.
5. Retaining walls which are not over 3 feet in height unless supporting a surcharge.
6. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed two to one.
7. Walks and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade, not over any basement or story below, and not part of an accessible (handicap) path.
8. Painting, papering and similar finish work.
9. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
10. Satellite dishes 3 feet in diameter or less when utilizing only low voltage wiring.
11. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of a single family dwellings projecting not more than 54 inches.
12. Decks not exceeding 200 sq. ft. in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to dwelling, not serving the required exit door.
13. Repairs which involve only the replacement of component parts of existing work with similar materials for the purpose of maintenance, and which do not aggregate over \$100 in valuation in any twelve month period, and do not affect any electrical, plumbing, or mechanical installation. Repairs exempt from permit requirements shall not include any addition, change, or modification in construction, exit facilities, or permanent fixtures or equipment.
14. No permit is required for the clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in drainage or water piping providing the repair does not entail the replacement or installation of new piping (leaks in gas systems will require a permit and pressure test). Toilets may also be replaced without a permit.
15. No permit is necessary for portable heating, air conditioning, or ventilation equipment. Replacement of component parts of an existing appliance or mechanical equipment does not require a permit.
16. For electrical work no permit is required for portable motors and/or appliances which have an attachment plug end. Temporary decorative lighting (such as Christmas Lights) are not required to have a permit. Circuit breakers may be replaced or repaired without a permit. Low voltage wiring (25 volts or less) may be installed without a permit.

If you have any questions concerning the above please do not hesitate to ask the Building and Fire Safety Division staff person in attendance.