



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BUILDING DIVISION

REQUIRED PERMITS & WORK EXEMPT FROM PERMIT for Residential (R-3) Building, Plumbing, Electrical, & Mechanical

Permits Required. Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a building or structure, 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.

Work exempt from permit. Permits shall not be required for the following. Exemption from permit requirements of the 2025 California Residential Code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of the code or any other laws or ordinances of the City of South San Francisco.

Note: Although a Building Permit may not be required for work listed below, there may be conditions or restrictions on such work by either the Planning Department or the Public Works Department. You must review your project with these departments in order to determine if it is permissible.

BUILDING PERMITS: A building permit shall not be required for the following:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet.
2. Fences, other than swimming pool barrier, 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 upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
5. Sidewalks and driveways.
6. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
7. Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
8. Swings and other playground equipment.
9. 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.
10. 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 and do not serve the exit door required by Section R318.4.

Unless specifically exempted below, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits will be required for the above exempted items.

ELECTRICAL PERMITS: An electrical permit shall not be required for the following:

1. Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets there for.
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.
5. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

MECHANICAL PERMITS: A mechanical permit shall not be required for the following:

1. Portable heating appliances.
2. Portable ventilation appliances.
3. Portable cooling units.
4. Steam, hot- or chilled-water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative coolers.
7. Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.
8. Portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

PLUMBING PERMITS: A plumbing permit shall not be required for the following:

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe become 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, nor for the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provide such repairs do not involve or the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.
3. GAS:
 - a. Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
 - b. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
 - c. Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.