



# WHEN DO I NEED A PERMIT?

## Permits Are Required To:

- Construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, or demolish a building or structure,
- Change the use of a building; or
- Erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system.

You must obtain a permit prior to beginning any work. In situations when work must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted to the Permit Center on the next business day.

## Work Exempt From Permits:

A permit is not required for some work, listed below. Any work, whether or not it requires a permit, must meet the intent and provisions of the [Olympia Municipal Code](#) (OMC) and any other laws or ordinances of the City of Olympia.

Examples of Work Exempt From Permits	
One-Story Detached Accessory Building	Used as a storage or tool shed, playhouse or similar use, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (for residential) or 120 square feet (for commercial) and is detached at least six (6) feet from the next structure
Fences	Not over seven (7) feet high. (Deer fence-type may be eight (8) feet high.)
Movable Cases, Counters and Partitions	Not over 5 feet, 9 inches high
Retaining Walls	Which are not over four (4) feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting loads caused by backfilling of soil, proximity of foundations, parking, driveways, or hydrostatic pressures
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
Unroofed Platforms, Decks, Porches and Walks and Driveways	Not over 30 inches, not attached, above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below
Painting, Papering	And similar finish work
Residential Window Awnings	Supported by an exterior wall when projecting not more than 54 inches
Prefabricated Residential Swimming Pools	In which the pool walls are entirely above adjacent grade and if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons
Replacement of Broken Window Glass	Replacement of the entire window does require a permit

*Continued on reverse*

## Work Requiring Permits:

Permits are required for the following types of work and a plan detailing the proposed work is often required.

Examples of Work Requiring Permits	
Building Demolition	Required.
Electrical	Required for all electrical work except for replacement of lamps, fixtures or trim. Larger commercial projects may require an electrical plan submittal and review. Electrical permits must be obtained by the building owner or a licensed electrical contractor.
Excavation or Fill	State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) required if it involves more than 500 cubic yards of earth.
Felling More Than Six (6) Trees	Required, if six (6) inches or larger in diameter within any twelve month period on unimproved property.
Fire Systems	Required for all fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, fire suppression systems and hood and duct systems. A plan must be submitted for review and approval.
Foundation Repair/Replacement	Required.
In-ground Fuel Tanks	Required for removing or abandonment of in-ground fuel tanks. Additional information is usually required. Contact the Olympia Fire Department at 360.753.8348.
Manufactured Homes	Required for the installation of a manufactured home.
Mechanical	Required for all mechanical work including the replacement of a furnace, hot water heater or gas appliance, etc. Larger commercial projects may require a mechanical plan submittal and review.
Moving a Building	Required to move a building in to, out of, or within the City. The permit application must be reviewed and approved by several City departments, utility companies and private companies, such as telephone, cable and railroad.
Plumbing	Required for all work on plumbing systems other than minor repair. Larger commercial projects may require a plumbing plan submittal and review.
Reroof	Required for residential and commercial.
Siding Repair or Replacement	Required.
Signs	Required for the installation of a sign. Drawings of the sign must be submitted for review and approval.
Temporary Power	Required.
Temporary Signs and Banners	Required.
Window Replacement	Required.
Wood Stoves and Fireplace Inserts	Required.
Work in the City Right of Way	All work in the City right of way requires a permit. Contact Community Planning and Development at 360.753.8314.
Yard Sprinkler Systems	Required.

## Questions?

Contact Community Planning and Development at 360.753.8314, email [cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us) or visit us online at [olympiawa.gov/buildingpermits](http://olympiawa.gov/buildingpermits)