



GARFIELD COUNTY WASHINGTON
PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT
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When is a Building Permit Required?

Projects that Require a Building Permit

Generally speaking, a permit is required for new construction projects, remodels that change the footprint of the original structure, changes in roof pitch, and all structural changes. Before seeking a permit, make sure that your project is an allowed use in the area/zone you are working in.

A building permit is required if you are:

Building or installing:

- A new structure
- Porches, decks and patios that are more than 30 inches above grade OR over 200 square feet OR attached to the main structure
- A patio or deck cover that is over 200 square feet OR attached to the main structure
- Chimneys
- Garages and carports
- First-time installation of fixtures and appliances permanently connected to electrical, mechanical, gas and/or plumbing system(s)
- Fences and privacy walls higher than 7 feet
- Sheds that are attached to a house or other structure
- Detached sheds or playhouses if they are greater than 200 square feet
- Swimming pools with a depth of 24 or more inches
- Attic pull-down stairs
- Retaining walls supporting more than 4 feet of earth
- Skylights
- Window or door replacements

Adding to or changing:

- Attics
- Basements
- Rooms
- Dormers, bay windows or other wall openings
- Water heater or any other parts of the plumbing system
- Plumbing systems to relocate fixtures
- Furnaces and any other parts of the heating and gas system
- Circuits or any other parts of the electrical system (permitted and inspected through Washington State Labor and Industries www.lni.wa.gov)
- Porch walls
- Garage conversions

Repairing or replacing:

- Reroofing, other than small repairs
 - Structural roof repairs
 - Replacing or repairing foundations
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Projects that Do Not Require a Building Permit

Permits are not required for the following, when related to single-family homes, provided they do not encroach over a subsurface drain system, public utility easement, or into buffers or required setbacks from property lines:

- One-story detached accessory structures under 200 square feet residential (120 square feet commercial) used for storage only
- Fences not over 7 feet high measured from the highest point to grade
- Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless they support surcharge (ie, holding back a load, such as a slope) or impound Class I, II or IIIA liquids (ie, flammable liquids)
- Water tanks supported directly on 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
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade AND not over any basement or story below AND not part of an accessible route (ie, an access route required under the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3* occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons, and are installed entirely above the ground. (Temporary growing structures for commercial production constructed with the roof and sides of polyethylene, polyvinyl or similar flexible synthetic material, used to provide plants with either frost protection or increased heat retention. For commercial growing, this is pursuant to WAC 51-50-007.
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-story family dwellings.
- Window awnings in Group R-3* and U** occupancies, supported by an exterior wall which does not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and does not require additional support.
- Non-fixed, movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height
- Patios or decks not more than 30 inches above the adjacent grade that are accessory to structures constructed under the International Residential Code.

Examples of typical home improvement projects that do not require a permit:

- Ceramic, tile, hardwood floors, carpet
- Crown molding, baseboards, trim
- Replacement of a glass or glazing within an existing window pane or a door within the existing frame

- Gutters and down spouts
- Kitchen cabinets (new and existing)
- On-grade patios, decks, and porches
- Recreational equipment (swings, jungle gyms, skateboard ramps, etc.)
- Small-scale roof repairs
- Detached sheds or playhouses that are 200 square feet or less in size. Note: Setback requirements per the local zoning ordinance still apply

Projects that Do Not Require a Gas Permit:

- Portable heating device
- Portable ventilation equipment
- Portable cooling unit
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment
- Replacement of parts
- Portable evaporative cooler
- Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.

Projects that Do Not Require a Plumbing Permit:

- Stopping leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, 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 will be required.
- Clearing stoppages or repairing 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

Projects that do not require a mechanical Permit:

- Portable ventilation appliances, evaporative coolers, independent fuel cell appliances, heating appliances and cooling units.
- Piping within any heating or cooling code regulated heating equipment.
- Replacement of minor parts.

These requirements are taken from the 2018 International Residential Code, 2018 International Building Code, 2018 Uniform Plumbing Code, 2018 International Mechanical Code and 2018 international Fuel Gas Codes.

Please note that this document is not intended to address all aspects or requirements of a project and is intended as a starting point for investigation. For detailed information on a specific project, permit, or code requirement, contact your local building department staff.

*Group R-3 refers to one and two-family dwelling units, or adult and child care facilities that provide accommodation for five or fewer persons of any age for less than 24 hours.)

** Group U refers to a utility structure such as a garage or shed.