



Building Permits

When do I need a building permit?

Under the Building Code Act, a building permit is required for the construction and/or demolition of a new building, an addition, or material alteration of any building or structure. The following is a list of common projects that require or do not require a building permit:

When is a Building Permit Required?

As the building owner, you are ultimately responsible for complying with all building requirements. Failure to obtain building permits can result in costly construction delays, legal action and/or the removal of work already completed.

The following is a list of common projects that require a building permit. The list is not exhaustive. If you have any questions please [contact Toronto Building](#).

1. Construct a **new building**
2. Construct an **addition** to an existing building, such as
 - second or third story additions
 - attached garages, carports
 - sunrooms
 - solariums, porches, decks.
3. Make **structural or material alterations**, such as
 - adding or removing walls (i.e., changing room sizes and/or uses)
 - new windows or doors where there were none before
 - enlarging or relocating existing windows or doors
 - enclosing an existing deck, porch or patio of any size.
4. Construct an **accessory structure** larger than 10 square metres* (108 square feet) in area, such as
 - Detached Garage
 - Workshop
 - Garden shed
 - Carport
 - Pool house or cabana

***Note:** If you are constructing an **accessory structure** and it is **attached** to an existing building and/or has **plumbing**, regardless of its size, a building permit is required.

5. **Finishing a basement**, if the work proposed includes any of the following,
 - structural or material alterations
 - installing or modifying heating and or plumbing systems
 - excavating and/or constructing foundations
 - basement underpinning
 - constructing a basement entrance

- adding a second suite
- 6. **Energy and environmental building** improvements, such as
 - roof top storm water retention systems
 - **green roofs**
 - structures used in the support of a wind turbine generator with a rated output of more than 3kW
 - solar projects such as installation of solar collector systems and solar hot water systems
- 7. Construct a **deck** more than 60 centimetres (24 inches) above ground
- 8. Construct a **retaining wall** more than one metre (3 feet 3 inches) in height provided the retaining wall is on or adjacent to public property (including streets), building entrances, and on private property accessible to the public
- 9. Constructing a **tent** that
 - covers more than 60 metres squared (646 square feet); and/or
 - is **attached** to a building; and/or
 - is within 3 metres (9 feet 10 inches) from another structure.
- 10. **Demolish** or remove all, or a portion of a building
- 11. Install or reconstruct a **chimney or fireplace**
- 12. Install a **wood burning stove or fireplace**
- 13. Install or modify **heating and or plumbing systems**
- 14. Install a **backwater valve**
- 15. Install a **backflow prevention device**
- 16. **Change a building's use** (i.e. from residential to office or single dwelling unit house to multi-dwelling unit house). Even if no construction is proposed, if a change of use is proposed a building permit is required.

When is a Building Permit Not Required?

The following are examples of work which do not require a building permit and are not subject to the provisions of the building code. However, please note that this list is not exhaustive and judgment should be used depending on the situation and circumstances associated with the project. Even if a building permit is not required, compliance with the Zoning Bylaw is required.

1. An **uncovered platform** (i.e. deck) attached to a residential building provided:
 - its finished deck level is not more than 60 cm (24 inches) above the adjacent finished grade; and/or
 - it does not form part of an exit required under the building code; and
 - complies with the Zoning Bylaw.
2. Installing a **skylight** in an existing building provided:
 - the building is a house or small building (3 storeys or less) and
 - the installation does not require the removal of more than one rafter, joist, or other similar structural member (with the exception of a truss);
3. **Re-cladding** of a house or small building (3 storeys or less) with non-combustible material other than brick or stone veneer;
4. Adding or replacing **insulation**;
5. The replacement of **windows or doors** provided:
 - there is no change in the location or size of the window and/or door;
 - the structural support for the opening (i.e. lintel) is not affected; and
 - a new exit is not created;
6. Replacing a **furnace or boiler** in a house;

7. The installation of additional **cooling systems, gas fireplaces, air cleaners, in-line humidifiers, or hot water tanks** in a house;
8. Repairing and replacing **plumbing fixtures**;
9. Replacing existing **roofing material** provided no structural work is required;
10. **Finishing a basement** of a house, if:
 - the work does not include structural or material alterations;
 - no additional dwelling unit(s) is (are) created (i.e. a second unit); and
 - the work does not include the installation of new plumbing;
11. Undertaking **waterproofing repairs** to a basement;
12. Installation of **cabinetry and millwork**.
13. **Plastic Sheet Covered Accessory Structures** (i.e. snow canopies, driveway tents, automotive canopy) do not require a building permit if installed on or after October 15th and are removed on or before April 15th. Compliance with the Zoning Bylaw is required.
14. Constructing a **retaining wall** that is on private property, not accessible to the public and/or where the height is less than 1 metre in height at any location.
15. A building permit is not required to install a **sump pump**.

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