



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND INSPECTIONS
375 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 220
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101-1806
Phone: 651-266-8989 Fax: 651-266-9124
Visit our Web Site at www.stpaul.gov/dsi

When is a permit required?

Section 1300.0120 of the
2015 Minnesota Residential Code
and
Section 33.03 of the City of Saint Paul
Legislative Code

A general building permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of residences, garages, carports, decks and similar structures. (See back side for exemptions from permit.) Minor alterations that do not constitute normal maintenance require a building permit if the value, including both labor value and the cost of materials, exceeds \$500.00, or if they are required under the State Building Code or the Saint Paul Legislative Code. ***If your property is located in a Heritage Preservation District or Site, approval is required from the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) for exterior work or repairs regardless of the value.***

Other work which requires a building permit:

- Detached accessory structures, such as tool or garden sheds, require a building permit if they are larger than 200 square feet. Any such structure in a Heritage Preservation District or Site, regardless of size, requires approval by the HPC. Accessory structures under 200 square feet and not in a Heritage Preservation District or Site do not require a building permit but must comply with all provisions of the City's Zoning Ordinance for setbacks and lot coverage. See the website for more information.
- Decks require a building permit. Exception: A deck or platform that is not attached to a structure with frost footings, does not act as a landing outside an exterior door and is not more than 30 inches above grade. However, all decks or platforms greater than 24 inches above grade must meet the zoning setbacks and lot coverage requirements. (ALL decks located in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require HPC approval.)
- Retaining walls supporting more than 4 feet of earth require a building permit. (ALL retaining walls located in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require HPC approval.)
- In-ground and above ground swimming pools with a capacity greater than 5000 gallons requires a building permit. NOTE: ALL permanent pools, regardless of size, located in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require approval from HPC. The City's zoning ordinance regulates the location of pools and hot tubs from property lines.

Other permits required.

- Grading or filling a property or in-ground pool requires a grading permit. A grading permit is not required for minor earth work associated with gardens or landscaping planters that do not affect drainage patterns. Grading permits are done using the same application as a general building permit.
- Most work on electrical, plumbing, piping, sheet metal or heating and air conditioning systems require trade permits. See our website for more information.
- For information on fence requirements in the City of St. Paul please see our website.

Exemptions from Permit:

- One-story detached accessory structures, used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet. **(All accessory structures in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require HPC approval.)**
- Decks and platforms that do not act as landings outside an exterior door, are not more than 30” above grade and not attached to a structure with frost footings. Decks greater than 24” above grade must meet zoning setbacks. **(All decks in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require HPC approval.)**
- Retaining walls supporting less than 4 feet of earth. **(All retaining walls in a Heritage Preservation District or Site require HPC approval.)**
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to dwelling units which are 24” or less in depth, do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground. **(The city’s zoning ordinance regulates the location of pools and hot tubs from property lines.)**
- Residential sidewalks and driveways do not require a building permit. However, a zoning review is required for new or expanded driveways.
- Painting, wall papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops, and similar finish work.
- Minor earth work associated with gardens or landscaping that do not affect drainage patterns.

For additional information:

Zoning Section: For information about Zoning Code setbacks, lot coverage, land usage, call: 651-266-9008

Plan Review Section: For information on Building Code and construction requirements, call: 651-266-9007

Heritage Preservation Comm. Staff: For information on heritage preservation districts/sites or design review guidelines call: 651-266-9078

Visit our Website! www.stpaul.gov/dsi

The statements above are intended as general circumstances when permits are necessary. You are advised to contact our office in specific cases to determine if a permit is required. Permits may be issued to the homesteader of the property for single and two-family residential construction or to a contractor licensed by the City of Saint Paul. State of Minnesota contractor's licenses do not exempt contractors from city licenses requirements.