



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
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## When is a Permit Required?

A general building permit is required for all structural revisions to residences, garages, carports, decks and similar structures or buildings, except as noted below. Non-structural revisions or remodelings 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. ***If your residence is in a Historic Preservation Area, a permit is required for exterior work or repairs such as tuckpointing, siding, window replacement, patching a roof, etc., regardless of the value.***

### Other work which requires a permit:

- Detached accessory structures, such as tool or garden sheds, if they are larger than 200 square feet. Any such structure in the Heritage Preservation District or a designated historic site, regardless of size will need a permit and approval by the Historical Preservation Commission. Accessory structures under 120 square feet and not in a historic area do not require a permit but must comply with all provisions of the City's Zoning Ordinance for setbacks and lot coverage. Building permit information on garages and sheds is available at our office above or on our website. (See information below)
- Decks require a permit. Exception: Except in historic areas or designated historic sites, a deck or platform not attached to a structure with frost footings and not more than 30 inches above grade does not require a permit. However, decks or platforms greater than 24 inches above grade must meet the zoning setbacks and lot coverage requirements.
- Retaining walls supporting more than 4 feet of earth behind them. (In historic districts or sites, all retaining walls require a permit.)
- All fence installations. Check with our office or our website for requirements. (See information below)
- In-ground and above ground swimming pools with a capacity greater than 5000 gallons. NOTE: All permanent pools, regardless of size, require a permit in historic districts or designated historic sites. The City's zoning ordinance regulates the location of pools and hot tubs from property lines. (See information below)
- Most work on electrical, plumbing, piping, sheet metal or heating and air conditioning systems.
- Grading or filling a property. A permit is not required for minor earth work associated with gardens or landscaping planters that do not affect drainage patterns.

### 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 the Historic Preservation Area require a permit.)**
- Decks and platforms not more than 30" above adjacent grade and not attached to a structure with frost footings and which is not part of an accessible route. Decks greater than 24" above grade must meet zoning setbacks. **(All decks in the Historic Preservation Area require a permit.)**
- 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 or impounding Class I, II, or III-A liquids. **(All retaining walls in the Historic Preservation Area require a permit.)**

- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to dwelling units constructed to the provisions of the International Residential Code or R-3 occupancies constructed to the provisions of the International Building Code, 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.)**
- Sidewalks and driveways that are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops, and similar finish work. **(All exterior work in the Historic Preservation Area requires a permit.)**
- Minor earth work associated with gardens or landscaping that do not affect drainage patterns.

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

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

**Heritage Preservation Comm. Staff:** For information on historic districts or sites, design guidelines, call: 651-266-9078

**Visit our Website!** [www.stpaul.gov/dsj](http://www.stpaul.gov/dsj) On our home page; click on Building Plan Review from the list on the right hand side and you will be able to access many informational handouts and forms.

*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.*