

 <p>CITY OF <b>PALO ALTO</b> Building Division</p>	<p><b>WORK EXEMPT FROM PERMIT</b></p> <p>City of Palo Alto (CPA) Building Inspection Division 285 Hamilton Ave. Inspection Request: 650 329-2496</p>	Revision Date: 05/20/2015
		General Requirements for: <b>Residential/Commercial Buildings</b>
		Codes Enforced: 2013 California Code of Regulations Title 24 Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC)
<p>The information provided in this document is general and intended as a guide only. Each project is unique and additional requirements may be enforced as deemed appropriate.</p>		

**WARNING**

- **Work without permit penalty fee: CBC Appendix chapter 1 section 108.4 and PAMC. Whenever work for which a permit is required by this Chapter has been commenced without first obtaining a permit, an additional penalty fee equal to the amount of the permit fee shall be assessed.**

**Work exempt from permit CBC 105.2**

- Exemptions from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction. **Permits shall NOT be required for the following:**

**BUILDING:**

1. One-story detached accessory *structures* used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet, however any electrical, plumbing or mechanical work requires a permit.
2. Fences other than block and concrete walls not over 7 feet high. Block and concrete walls not over 6 feet high. Fences shall be constructed per [Palo Alto Fence Code](#).
3. Oil derricks.
4. 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 IIIA liquids.
5. 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 2:1.
6. Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets other than kitchen cabinets, countertops other than kitchen countertops, and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. 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 ground.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
12. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support of Group R-3 and U occupancies.
13. Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.

14. Decks not exceeding 200 square feet in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling and do not serve the exit door required by section R311.4.

### **CBC ELECTRICAL:**

**Repairs and maintenance:** Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

**Radio and television transmitting stations:** The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but do apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installations of towers and antennas.

**Temporary testing systems:** A permit shall not be required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

### **CRC ELECTRICAL:**

1. Listed cord-and-plug connected *temporary* decorative lighting.
2. Reinstallation of attachment plugs receptacles but not the outlets therefore.
3. Replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.
4. electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
5. Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

### **GAS:**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
3. portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

### **MECHANICAL:**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.
8. portable-fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.

### **PLUMBING:**

1. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipes become defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with the new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
2. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of 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.

**105.2.1 Emergency repairs.** Where equipment replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the permit application shall be submitted within the next working business day to the building official.

**105.2.2 Repairs.** Application or notice to the building official is not required for ordinary repairs to structures, replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles. Such repairs shall not include the cutting away of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety.

**105.2.3 Public Service Agencies.** A permit shall not be required for the installation, alteration or repair of generation transmission, distribution or metering or other related equipment that is under the ownership and control of public service agencies by established right.

**Work that requires a permit CBC 105.1.**

- Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit.

**City of Palo Alto Policy**

➤ See [Residential Inspection Guidelines](#) for additional requirements for the following items.

1. **Arbors:** A permit is required for free standing arbors over 120 square feet OR when attached to the house. See Palo Alto [Zoning Code](#) requirements for setback and height limitations.
2. **Decks:** For residential, multifamily, and commercial buildings a permit is required for the construction, repair, replacement, relocation, addition or alteration of decks that are greater than 30 inches above finished grade OR attached to the building OR requires steps, OR part of the required exit path from the building.
3. **Fence and gate trellis:** No fence permit is required per Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Sec. 16.48.050 for fences less than 7 feet from grade. Gate trellis is allowed only for entry way and may be up to 8 feet tall and 5 feet wide. All fences shall be constructed according to PAMC fence ordinance. See [Fence Code](#) guidelines for all requirements including front yard and corner lot height and setback limitations. Note: fences erected or replaced that are located in a public utility easement require an encroachment permit from Public Works Department.
4. **Window replacement:** A permit is required for window replacement NO EXCEPTIONS.
5. **Water heater, Air conditioner and furnaces:** A permit is required when replacing existing and installing new mechanical equipment.
6. **Seismic upgrade:** A permit is not required for minor residential voluntary seismic upgrade such as bolting mudsill to foundation and sheathing of cripple walls; however a permit is required for more complex projects requiring engineering.