



DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT

BI-1

Drive through any part of town and you will see lots of building activity. Throughout San Clemente, residents take it upon themselves to do fix-up and remodeling chores to their homes and businesses. One of the most common questions asked is, "Do I need a building permit?" The best way to answer this question is to call or visit the Community Development Department prior to beginning work. Our Building Division staff is available to answer your questions and provide direction regarding Building Permit process. The amount of time invested to have your questions answered is worth the effort. It's a shame to have your project underway, only to find out halfway through that you needed a permit.

The primary reason for requiring a permit is to ensure that the job is inspected so that sub-standard work is caught and corrected before safety problems develop. Proper permits also protect homeowners against unexpected costs and delays when selling their homes. In these days of lengthy disclosure reports and professional inspections for the buyers, sales are complicated by the lack of permits for the very improvements that helped make the sale in the first place. The state disclosure law specially requires the seller to disclose improvements made without permits.

The following are guidelines regarding the need for building and other construction permits. They are general and not meant to cover every circumstance. **For specific information, contact the Building Division at 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente, Ca 92673 (949) 361-6100.**

Before you obtain a permit, you must obtain approval from your local Homeowner's Association. Also check with the Planning Division for requirements for front, rear, and side yard setbacks, and the Engineering Division for easement and right-of-way requirements.

Building Permits

Permits are required for all building construction and most repair work, detached structures, relocating walls and room partitions, replacing windows and doors, converting attics and lofts to habitable space, converting garage space to any other than parking, repairing foundations, altering attics for storage, replacing roofs, floors, posts, beams, construction or modification of retaining walls, block walls, most masonry work, decks, patio covers, pools, portable spas, and fences over 6 feet in height.

Electrical Permits

An Electrical Permit is required for all work related to the electrical system in a building. All permanent wiring, replacement of built-in appliances such as ceiling exhaust fans, rewiring of such appliances, replacement of circuit breaker panels and sub-panels, and installation of wiring to stationary items such as A/C units. No permits are needed for plug-in low voltage lighting.

Plumbing Permits

A Plumbing Permit is required for installing, removing, altering, repairing, or replacing any plumbing, gas or drainage system, or any fixture for water heating or treatment. This includes water heaters, garbage disposals, dishwashers, tubs, sinks, toilets, showers, water softener units,

and outdoor irrigation systems that are hooked up to the household water supply.

Mechanical Permits

A Mechanical Permit is required for installing, altering, repairing, or replacing the mechanical system in a building. This includes heat, air conditioning, refrigeration units, range hoods and mechanical exhaust fans, and dryer vents.

Encroachment Permits

Any construction or improvements that encroach into the public right-of-way requires an encroachment permit. No construction is allowed within an easement area. A clear understanding of the property lines and easement areas is always helpful for the homeowner. **For specific information, contact the Engineering Division at (949) 361-6144.**

Homeowners also need to be aware of things that do not need permits but can still cause trouble; building low planter walls against the wall of a house as part of a landscape design which can cause substantial water damage unless the house wall is properly waterproofed; and walkways and patio slabs that can alter the drainage of a yard which can cause flooding in the residence or soil erosion on adjacent slopes. Also, no permit is needed to paint a house, but it is illegal to dispose of paint and thinner in household trash or in a county landfill. Anything that is toxic, paint, motor oil, laundry bleach – must be taken to an approved disposal station.

City of San Clemente Building Division, 910 Calle Negocio, Suite 100, San Clemente CA 92673
Phone (949) 361-6100 Fax (949) 361-8281 - www.san-clemente.org