

Do I need a building permit?

Whenever you construct, reconstruct, enlarge, alter, or demolish a structure, a permit is required prior to starting the work. If you are unsure if your project requires a permit, please contact the Community Development at (540) 347-2405 or email us at permittech@warrentonva.gov

The following are examples of work that require a building permit (see USBC 108.1):

- Alteration of any required means of egress
- Building a new house
- Building an addition onto an existing house or attached garage
- Converting an existing deck or screened porch into a sunroom
- Building an attached or detached garage or carport
- Converting a garage to a habitable space or enclosing a carport
- Building a porch, screened porch, deck, associated steps, ramp, pergola, portico, or gazebo
- Building or installing a tool shed over 256 square feet in area- Please note that a zoning permit is required for all sheds.
- Finishing off an unfinished attic, basement, or room over the garage
- Installing a flag pole over 30' in height, please note that a Zoning permit is required for all flag poles
- Moving or removing a load bearing wall or partition
- Retaining wall which support 3 or more feet of unbalanced fill
- Bulkheads, piers, and docks
- Repairing, altering, enlarging or modifying any structural element of the house, including any damaged structural element, such as load bearing stud walls, columns, piers, footings, foundations, floor joists, rafters, beams or girders
- Replacing/adding fuel fired equipment
- Enlarging or adding a door opening or window opening
- Changing the use of the structure (example: change from residential use to business use)
- Installing a pool, hot tub or spa greater than 150 square feet, 5000 gallons, OR 24" deep
- Re-roofing commercial buildings
- New electrical wiring or circuits
- Movement of lot line that increases hazard or safety of existing structure
- Removal or disturbance of any material containing asbestos for demolition or alteration of a building
- Demolition of an existing structure The building code allows some work to be done without obtaining a permit. While a permit is not required, the work must be in compliance with the code.

Some examples of work that does not require a permit include (see USBC 108.2):

- Making ordinary repairs and improvements, including, but not limited to:
 - Painting the inside or outside of the house or detached structures
 - Repairing drywall, plaster, exterior siding, etc.
 - Installing new floor coverings, such as vinyl, carpet, or hardwood
 - Installing or refurbishing cabinetry
 - Repairing or replacing porch or deck flooring boards Please note a permit is required to repair or replace the joists or girders.
 - Repairing or replacing handrails on a porch
 - Installing or replacing doors and windows, including storm windows, where no structural changes are performed
 - Installing or replacing exterior siding
 - Residential re-roofing: Old shingle roof can be left in place provided that there are not more than two previous layers of shingles and that the existing shingles are not water saturated.
 - Installing or replacing gutters and downspouts
 - Repairing or replacing siding
- Installing driveways or sidewalks
- Constructing or installing a storage shed, playhouse, etc, 256 square feet or less in area **Zoning permit required.**
- Adding a fence (which is not part of a swimming pool enclosure) and which is 6' or less in height Refer to subdivision covenants (if applicable) **Zoning permit required.**
- Building recreational equipment, such as swings, skateboard ramps, jungle gyms, etc.
- Adding roof insulation
- Installing any wiring or equipment which operates at less than 50 volts
- Installing a security alarm system
- Replacing existing electrical water heater with a new electric water heater
- Replacing electrical fixtures, such as switches and receptacles •Installing or replacing a ceiling fan to a pre-wired switch
- Replacing plumbing fixtures, such as sinks
- Replacing or repairing existing mechanical appliances (of equal size and type) This exception is not applicable to gas and oil-fired appliances.
- Temporary ADA ramps with less than 30" rise for residential properties