



BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Building Division

Economic and Community Development
34009 Alvarado-Niles Road
Union City, CA 94587
510-675-5313 – building@unioncity.org

The purpose of a building permit is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life or limb, health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location and maintenance of all buildings, stability, sanitation, adequate light and ventilation, energy conservation, and structures. Permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any construction or demolition. Permits can be issued to a contractor licensed by the State of California, the property owner of record, or an agent for the property owner of record (an "Authorization to Act as an Agent" form shall be submitted to the Building Division).

Except as listed below, a building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical permit is needed for most types of construction. **A building permit is not needed for the following construction activities:**

1. One-story detached accessory building used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet. **Note:** Approval from the Planning Division may be required. *See the Planning Division website for more information.*
2. Fences not over 7 feet high. **Note:** *Approval from the Planning Division may be required.*
3. Non-fixed and movable cases, counters, and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches.
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 certain hazardous and/or flammable liquids.
5. Water tanks supported directly upon 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. Platforms, walks, and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement of story below. **Note:** *Repair or replacement of public sidewalks of driveway curb cuts required review and approval by Public Works Department.*
7. Temporary motion picture, television, and theater stage sets and scenery.
8. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall of a single-family dwelling when projecting not more than 54 inches.
9. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a single-family dwelling that are less than 24" deep and provided the pool walls are entirely above the adjacent grade and if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons.
10. Oil derricks.
11. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops, and similar finish work.
12. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
13. Electrical repairs and maintenance limited to minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
14. Installation of portable gas heating appliances and replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment of make such equipment unsafe.
15. Installation of portable ventilation equipment, portable cooling unit, steam, hot, or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment by this code.
16. Installation of a self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds (5kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746W) or less.