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No-Plan Building Permit

INFORMATION BULLETIN

203

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This Information Bulletin establishes the procedure for the type of work that is eligible to obtain a building permit without a plan review for conformance with current building codes. Please note that only buildings and structures that have been legally permitted, constructed and passed final inspections are allowed to obtain No-Plan Building Permits.

If, after a No-Plan Building Permit is issued, the building inspector determines that the proposed work is too extensive or cannot verify that the existing construction qualifies as a No-Plan Building Permit, building construction plans will be required for review, and a new permit will be issued. A [Historical Review](#) may be required even if the project scope qualifies as a No-Plan Building Permit (refer to Section III in this information bulletin for requirements).

Building Permit Exceptions

A Building Permit is not required for the work listed below except when the work involves alterations, repairs, or improvements to a designated historical resource or if the building is located within a designated historic district. The work still must conform with all applicable codes and standards, even if a permit is not required. Below is a list of common exemptions for building permits (see [San Diego Municipal Code §129.0203](#) for the complete list of Building Permit exemptions):

- Repairs that involve only the replacement of components or existing work with similar materials for the purpose of maintenance, that do not have an aggregate valuation of over \$1,000.00, and that do not affect any electrical, plumbing, or mechanical installations.
- Installing replacement doors/windows for existing door/window openings in detached single-dwelling units, duplex or townhouse residential buildings, as defined in the California Residential Code (CRC), where **all** of the following conditions apply:
 - No modifications are required to be made to the exterior weather resistive flashings and
 - No alterations or modifications are made to the existing rough openings and
 - Existing doors or windows to be replaced are not required to be fire-resistive or compliant with the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) requirements.
- Replacement of drywall associated with the repair of electrical, mechanical or plumbing work when the total aggregate area of drywall being replaced does not exceed 100 square feet.
- The application of a new color coat to the existing stucco finish on walls.
- The relocation of cabinets and countertops in kitchens for a Group R-3 single-dwelling unit/duplex/townhouse structures.
- Tub-to-tub and shower-to-shower replacements that do not change the size or location of the tub or shower.

No-Plan Building Permits

A Building Permit may be issued for the following work without a plan review. Note that the work must conform to all applicable codes and standards. However, plans may be required for Historic Review per Section III of this bulletin.

- Replacement of doors/windows. The doors/windows must be the same size and type as the existing doors/windows with no changes to the existing opening size.
- Remodel of an existing kitchen and/or bathroom(s) within residential buildings (Group R-2 or R-3 occupancy only) with no changes to structural elements, wall framing or exterior walls and no added plumbing fixtures.
- Re-stucco (removal and replacement of existing stucco).
- Damage repair and replacement-in-kind (same size and specifications) when the existing structural framing system and life/safety elements are sufficiently intact for verification by the City inspector. Repair of damages for pre-engineered, pre-manufactured structural elements such as trusses, glue-laminated beams or columns, Parallams, Microlams, truss-joists, etc., are not eligible for No-Plan Building Permit, and plans and structural calculations for such repairs are required to be submitted for review and approval. Note that roof replacements are not eligible for a no-plan building permit. See [Information Bulletin 123 PDF](#), Renewal of Roof Covering, for further information.
- Replacement-in-kind (same size and specifications) of damaged stair stringers and treads for the detached single-dwelling unit, duplex or townhouse residential buildings. Guards and handrails, where removed, shall comply with the current CRC.
- Replace the existing prefabricated fireplace with an approved listed prefabricated fireplace in the same location for the detached single-dwelling units, duplexes or townhouse residential buildings. Installation shall be per the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Replace siding (vinyl, wood, engineered wood, fiber cement, fiberglass, light-gauge metal) over existing solid sheathing (plywood or OSB) with an approved weather-resistive barrier per a valid ICC-ESR Evaluation Report number or detached single-dwelling unit, duplex or townhouse residential buildings. Work cannot include any modifications to existing drywall or the exterior wall assembly besides the siding. The fire resistance rating must be maintained for walls requiring fire resistance. Applicant to provide a copy of the evaluation report to City inspector.
- Replace siding with stucco for the detached single-dwelling unit, duplex or townhouse residential buildings.
- Drywall repair or replacement in-kind. Existing drywall must be sufficiently intact for the verification of fire-resistive type and attachment by the City inspector. For drywall repair and replacement in-kind related to the repair of electrical, mechanical or plumbing work, the associated project/permit numbers must be provided at the time of No-Plan Building Permit application.

Additional Requirements

- Designated Historic**

If the project involves any parcel with a designated historical resource or is located within the boundaries of an adopted historic district, historical review is required. Please refer to [Information Bulletin 581 PDF](#), Designated Historical Resource Review, for additional Historic Review information.
- Potential Historic Resource**

If the site contains buildings or structures 45 years old or older, plans must be submitted through the Development Services Department for historic review, unless the project scope is exempted per [San Diego Municipal Code §143.0212](#). The length of this review will typically be ten business days. See [Information Bulletin 580 PDF](#), Potential Historical Resource Review, for supplemental submittal requirements.
- Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms in Existing Dwelling Units**

For all existing dwelling units, when a permit is required for the replacement of components, repairs, or maintenance of existing work, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with the requirements of California Building Code or CRC shall be installed, as applicable.
- Fire Alarm and Fire Sprinkler System**

Any work that obstructs or affects the location or functioning of sprinklers or fire alarms will require a permit for such work. See [Information Bulletin 137 PDF](#), "How to Obtain a Permit for Fire Alarm Systems," and [Information Bulletin 139 PDF](#), "How to Obtain a Permit for Fire Sprinkler Systems," for specific requirements.

Submittal Requirements

- [Project Contacts Form PDF](#) (DS-345)
- [No-Plan Building Permit Supplemental Application PDF](#) (DS-6005)
- [Owner-Builder Verification Form PDF](#) (DS-3042) This form must be completed and signed by the property owner if the property owner is obtaining the permit as an "Owner-Builder." Tenants/Lesseees may not sign this form. The form must be notarized if the property owner is not present to provide proof of identity.
- Plans/documents for Historic Review shall be provided in accordance with Section III of this bulletin.

Fees

See [Information Bulletin 501](#) for fees.

Permit Submittal

No-plan building permits must be submitted electronically through the online [portal](#) by selecting the Building Construction application. A virtual appointment can be scheduled after the project has been submitted to assist applicants in the submittal process through our [website](#).

Inspections

A pre-construction inspection will be required for all repair/replacement in-kind permits. If the building inspector determines that the proposed work is too extensive or cannot verify the existing construction to qualify as a No-Plan Building Permit, the inspector will require that construction plans be prepared for review, and a new permit will be required. For information concerning inspections, refer to [Information Bulletin 120 PDF](#), How to Obtain Project Inspections.

References

- [San Diego Municipal Code \(SDMC\)](#)
- [How to Obtain Project Inspections \(IB-120\) PDF](#)
- [Fire Alarm Systems \(IB-137\) PDF](#)
- [Fire Sprinkler Systems \(IB-139\) PDF](#)
- [Fee Schedule, Construction Permits - Structures \(IB-501\) PDF](#)
- [Potential Historical Resource Review \(IB-580\) PDF](#)
- [Designated Historical Resource Review \(IB-581\) PDF](#)
- [Project Contacts Form \(DS-345\) PDF](#)
- [Owner-Builder Verification \(DS-3042\) PDF](#)
- [No-Plan Building Permit Supplemental Application \(DS-6005\) PDF](#)