

When is a Permit Required?

Home or property owners of single-family homes, townhomes or duplexes in the City of San Diego must obtain a permit before constructing, expanding, altering, renovating, relocating, demolishing or changing the use of a building or structure. However, maintenance repairs under \$1,000 involving like-for-like replacements are exempt.

When are Permits NOT Needed?

Permits are not required for minor renovations like painting, wallpapering and installing flooring or cabinets. See [San Diego Municipal Code §129.0203](#) for a full list of exempt projects.

Exterior Door and Window Replacements*

Exterior door and window replacements are exempt if the wall and rough opening remain unchanged. Commercial properties and multi-family homes require a permit.

Fences

Fences up to seven feet tall do not require a permit. However, fences over six feet are prohibited in the front yard setback, and fences over three feet are prohibited in visibility areas.

Patio Covers*

Patio covers are exempt from permits unless in the Coastal Overlay Zone or a Planned Development. They must be 300 sq. ft. or less, not encroach into the setback and be no taller than 12 feet above grade. See [San Diego Municipal Code §113.0276](#).

Roof Coverings*

Simple re-roofing without structural changes is exempt. Altering the roof structure or diaphragm during re-roofing requires a permit.

* Permits required in historic districts and environmentally sensitive lands.

1 Swimming Pools

All in-ground swimming pools require a permit. Prefabricated above ground pools (5,000 gallons or less) don't require a permit.

2 Storage Shed or Playhouse

Storage sheds or playhouses over 120 sq. ft. in projected roof area require a permit.

3 Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels

All Solar PV installations require a permit.

4 Retaining Wall

A permit is needed for retaining walls more than three feet above the footing in height, or when supporting loads (surcharge).

5 Deck

Decks are exempt from permits if they do not serve as an exit door, are under 200 sq. ft., and are no higher than 30 inches above grade.

6 Temporary Storage Containers (TSCs)

TSCs, such as moving pods, dumpsters, temporary sheds, office or storage buildings and other structures, require a permit if they encroach on the public right of way, such as sidewalks or streets. For more info, see [Information Bulletin 718](#).

7 Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing

Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work, like the in-kind replacement of plumbing fixtures or adding circuits, replacing water heaters, or installing HVAC systems, requires a permit. Replacing switches, light fixtures, receptacles, appliances, showerheads, and plumbing fixtures do not.

