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Building permits for remodeling



Homeowners are learning that there are very few home improvements that don't require local building authority approval. This applies to outdoor projects and indoor projects.



Permits might seem like an inconvenience. However, permits offer a homeowner protections on their investment. How so? For starters, permits provide people assurances all the work is done properly. This is typically verified during inspections.

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Permits may be required even if there are no structures added to the property such as a deck, greenhouse pool or shed. Even if you're not expanding your home, you will usually have to get a building permit for interior remodeling.



A home depends on its load-bearing supports. An alteration of this nature is a major structural change that must be done with planning and supervision. Removing a wall requires installing a replacement such as a column or a beam in its place.

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Replacing a faucet doesn't require a permit. But more comprehensive plumbing projects require permits to ensure safety; such as relocating plumbing fixtures, replacing water heaters, replacing pipes, installing new drains, and new sewer lines.



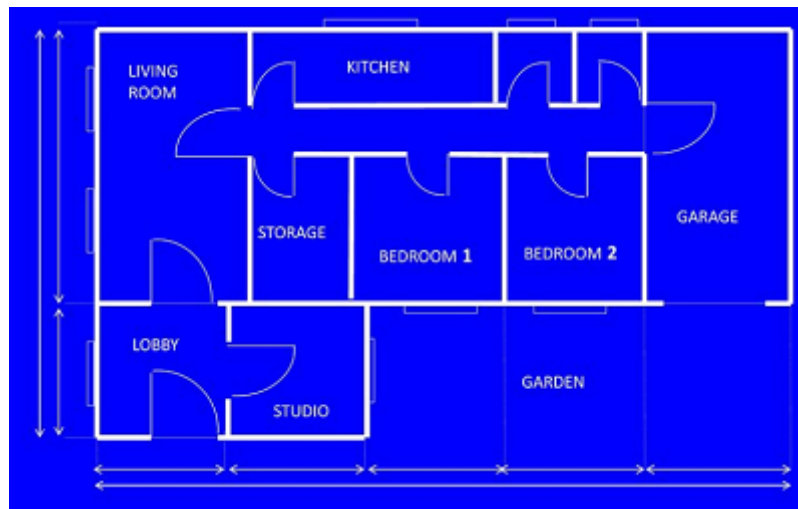
Replacing a light fixture doesn't require a permit. However, the more complex electrical tasks actually do require a permit; such as replacing the wiring, the electrical panel and adding circuits.

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Raising ceiling heights, adding skylights, fireplaces and egress windows are additional projects likely to require permits, as they must be done with an inordinate attention to detail and safety precautions. It is the very reason that most municipalities require a permit for this type of remodeling.



The task of obtaining a permit falls to the: remodeler or the contractor. This is usually included as one of the project fees. Do-It-Yourselfers must assume the responsibility of this task without a professional. Be certain that the work is up to code.

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Retrospective Permit for jobs already in progress

Get the permit before starting. In cases where the permit wasn't pulled before the work began, get a [retrospective permit](#). Do this even if you're in the middle of the remodeling. It may be possible, subject to an inspection of the work in progress.



Failing to obtain a permit could result in violations. Fines could be \$100 per day or more. Ignore these rules at your peril. Risks of failing to obtain a permit include but are not limited to include liens placed on the home, even deconstruction. Permits ensure against issues with insurance. Remember to retain detailed records of remodeling permits, contracts, plans, receipts and inspection reports for the life of the home.

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Other remodeling projects, which are unlikely to require a permit include but are not limited to paint, wallpaper, flooring, tile, kitchen countertops, backsplashes and kitchen cabinets. Rules vary by locality. Check with local building authorities; in the event there is even a hint of uncertainty about whether or not you need a building permit for your particular project.

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