

Department of Building and Zoning

Work Exempt from Permit

A permit is not required for the following work. Any work other than the exemptions listed below would need the applicable permit. Exemption from the permit requirements of the adopted codes shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction. Unless otherwise exempted, separate plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits will be required when appropriate.

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool or storage sheds, playhouses, pet shelters and similar uses, provided the projected floor area does not exceed 40 square feet in area and complies with all applicable zoning requirements. Such building must be located at least three (3) feet from any property line, shall not be located in any easement, and be at least six (6) feet into the rear yard from any principle structure. These regulations apply to A-1, R-1, R-2, R-4 zoned districts and to One & Two family dwellings in R-3 and R-5 Zoning Districts. Setbacks for all other zoned districts shall comply with the applicable zoning regulations as adopted by the City of Altoona Code of Ordinances.
2. Movable and non-fixed cases, racks, fixtures, counters and partitions not over five (5) feet nine (9) inches high.
3. Retaining walls which are not over four (4) feet in height, measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II, or IIIA liquids.
4. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height or diameter or width does not exceed two to one.
5. Swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy or One and Two Family Structure that are 24 inches or less in depth.
6. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one and two family dwellings
7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinet tops, and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage set and scenery.
9. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall and do not require additional support for Group R, Division 3 occupancies when projecting not more than 54 inches.
10. Amusement Rides (for the purposes of this exemption, accessory structures serving amusement rides and other structures located within the confines of an amusement ride theme park are not considered an amusement ride).
11. Minor maintenance and repair work that is deemed by the building official not to affect structural strength, safety, fire resistance, or sanitation, provided that no such work shall be performed in a manner contrary to any provisions of this code or any other laws.
12. Pouring an uncovered patio or a 3rd stall drive, providing that the concrete is not poured over any easements, does not divert water onto a neighboring property, and driveway stall flares up at a 45° angle from existing driveway. Additional stalls may not be poured straight down to sidewalk without a permit.

*Mechanical Exemptions - Portable equipment such as heating appliances, cooling equipment, evaporative coolers, fuel cells, appliances not connected to fixed piping, and ventilation appliances and equipment. Self-contained refrigeration systems that contain 10 pds or less of refrigerant or actuated by motors of 1 hsp or less. Steam, hot water, or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliance regulated by the code. Minor repair, cleaning, adjustment, or replacement of any heating, ventilating, cooling, or refrigeration equipment where the total cost of the work does not exceed \$100.00. This exemption shall be deemed to include adjustments by a gas supplier in a gas piping system due to the exchange or relocation of a gas meter.”

*Plumbing Exemptions – The removal and replacement of fixtures such as water closets, lavatories, etc; that do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures. The clearing of any stoppages (If work involves the removal or replacement of pipe then a permit is required).

*Electrical Exemptions – Replacement of lighting fixtures, receptacles, switches, overcurrent protection devices of the same volt and amperage. The repair or replacement of flexible cords of same volt and amperage. The process of manufacturing, testing, servicing, or repairing of electrical equipment or apparatus. Minor repair and adjustment where the total cost of the work does not exceed \$100.00.

All work performed shall be done by State of Iowa-licensed contractors. Owner/Occupants of single-family properties may perform such work upon approval of the Building and Zoning Department. Homeowners must pass the homeowner’s electrical exam before work has taken place and before a permit can be issued