



City of Santa Barbara  
Building & Safety Division  
**Work Exempt From Permit**

Community Development  
630 Garden Street  
805-564-5485

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The following types of projects do not normally require a building permit from the City of Santa Barbara Building & Safety Division. However, many of the items listed below are regulated to some extent by the Public Works Department and/or the Planning & Zoning Division. Please contact each of them so that they may review the scope of work and determine if there are any special requirements specific to your project.

1. One-story detached residential accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, play houses, portable and fixed playground equipment, bicycle or skateboard ramps and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet, the height does not exceed ten (10) feet at the highest point, the structure does not encroach into required setbacks or required open yards, the structure does not obstruct required parking, and it is not served by any utilities. The combined square footage of exempt accessory structures may not exceed 200 square feet on any single parcel.
2. Residential fences and walls not over three and one half (3 1/2) feet in height that do not adversely affect drainage or cause erosion. The measurement should be taken from the lowest adjacent grade within five (5) feet of the fence or wall.
3. Freestanding or movable cases, counters, and interior partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height and not containing or requiring connections to electrical power or plumbing systems. A layout plan may be required as part of a tenant improvement project to ensure that the locations of these units do not interfere with the required exit and/or accessible paths.
4. Residential retaining walls which are not over four (4) feet in height as measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless the wall supports a surcharge, or impounds flammable liquids, or is installed on a slope 20% or greater, or tends to adversely affect drainage or cause increased erosion.
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 two to one (2:1).
6. Uncovered residential platforms, decks, porches, walks, and similar structures not more than eighteen (18) inches above grade and not over any basement or story below and not encroaching into required yard setbacks.
7. Interior painting, papering, and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television, and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Ground mounted radio, television and other masts or antenna or dish shaped communication reception or transmitting structures less than three (3) feet in diameter, which do not extend more than fifteen (15) feet above grade and are not served by electrical circuits regulated under the National Electrical Code (NEC). Light-weight roof-mounted radio, television, and other masts or antenna or dish shaped communication reception or transmitting structures less than two (2) feet in diameter, which do not extend more than fifteen (15) feet above the roof, are not served by electrical circuits regulated under the NEC, and which are not subject to the Architectural Board of Review, Historic Landmarks Commission, or Single Family Design Board.
10. Permit applications shall be submitted for other miscellaneous and minor work; however, work which does not exceed \$300 in valuation may be exempted by the Chief Building Official from permits and inspections.

*Unless otherwise exempted by City Ordinance No. 5536, separate plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits may be required for the above mentioned items. Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner that is in violation of the provisions of this code or any other applicable laws or ordinances.*