

§ 160D-1110. Building permits.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, no person shall commence or proceed with any of the following without first securing all permits required by the State Building Code and any other State or local laws applicable to any of the following activities:

- (1) The construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement to another site, removal, or demolition of any building or structure.
- (2) The installation, extension, or general repair of any plumbing system except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit is not required for the connection of a water heater that is being replaced if (i) the work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-21 who personally examines the work at completion and ensures that a leak test has been performed on the gas piping, and (ii) the energy use rate or thermal input is not greater than that of the water heater that is being replaced, there is no change in fuel, energy source, location, capacity, or routing or sizing of venting and piping, and the replacement is installed in accordance with the current edition of the State Building Code.
- (3) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any heating or cooling equipment system.
- (4) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment, except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit is not required for repair or replacement of electrical lighting fixtures or devices, such as receptacles and lighting switches, or for the connection of an existing branch circuit to an electric water heater that is being replaced if all of the following requirements are met:
 - a. With respect to electric water heaters, the replacement water heater is placed in the same location and is of the same or less capacity and electrical rating as the original.
 - b. With respect to electrical lighting fixtures and devices, the replacement is with a fixture or device having the same voltage and the same or less amperage.
 - c. The work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-43.
 - d. The repair or replacement installation meets the current edition of the State Building Code, including the State Electrical Code.

However, a building permit is not required for the installation, maintenance, or replacement of any load control device or equipment by an electric power supplier, as defined in G.S. 62-133.8, or an electrical contractor contracted by the electric power supplier, so long as the work is subject to supervision by an electrical contractor licensed under Article 4 of Chapter 87 of the General Statutes. The electric power supplier shall provide such installation, maintenance, or replacement in accordance with (i) an activity or program ordered, authorized, or approved by the North Carolina Utilities Commission pursuant to G.S. 62-133.8 or G.S. 62-133.9 or (ii) a similar program undertaken by a municipal electric service provider, whether the installation, modification, or replacement is made before or after the point of delivery of electric service to the customer. The exemption under this subsection applies to all existing installations.

(b) A building permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall comply with the North Carolina State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws. Nothing in this section requires a local government to review and approve residential building plans submitted to the local government pursuant to the North Carolina Residential Code, provided that the local government may review and approve the residential building plans as it deems necessary. If a local government chooses to review residential building plans for any structures subject to regulation under the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and G.S. 160D-1110

Two-Family Dwellings, all initial reviews for the building permit must be performed within 15 business days of submission of the plans. A local government shall not require residential building plans for one- and two-family dwellings to be sealed by a licensed engineer or licensed architect unless required by the North Carolina State Building Code. No building permits shall be issued unless the plans and specifications are identified by the name and address of the author thereof, and, if the General Statutes of North Carolina require that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a licensed architect or licensed engineer, no building permit shall be issued unless the plans and specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a licensed architect or of a licensed engineer. When any provision of the General Statutes of North Carolina or of any ordinance or development or zoning regulation requires that work be done by a licensed specialty contractor of any kind, no building permit for the work shall be issued unless the work is to be performed by such a duly licensed contractor.

(c) No permit issued under Article 9 or 9C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is required for any construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration performed in accordance with the current edition of the North Carolina State Building Code costing twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) or less in any single-family residence, farm building, or commercial building unless the work involves any of the following:

- (1) The addition, repair, or replacement of load-bearing structures. However, no permit is required for replacement of windows, doors, exterior siding, or the pickets, railings, stair treads, and decking of porches and exterior decks that otherwise meet the requirements of this subsection.
- (2) The addition or change in the design of plumbing. However, no permit is required for replacements otherwise meeting the requirements of this subsection that do not change size or capacity.
- (3) The addition, replacement, or change in the design of heating, air-conditioning, or electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment, other than like-kind replacement of electrical devices and lighting fixtures.
- (4) The use of materials not permitted by the North Carolina State Building Code.
- (5) The addition (excluding replacement) of roofing.
- (6) Any changes to which the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code applies.

(d) A local government shall not require more than one building permit for the complete installation or replacement of any natural gas, propane gas, or electrical appliance on an existing structure when the installation or replacement is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-21 or G.S. 87-43. The cost of the building permit for such work shall not exceed the cost of any one individual trade permit issued by that local government, nor shall the local government increase the costs of any fees to offset the loss of revenue caused by this provision.

(e) No building permit shall be issued pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for any land-disturbing activity, as defined in G.S. 113A-52(6), or for any activity covered by G.S. 113A-57, unless an erosion and sedimentation control plan for the site of the activity or a tract of land including the site of the activity has been approved under the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act.

(f) No building permit shall be issued pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for any land-disturbing activity that is subject to, but does not comply with, the requirements of G.S. 113A-71.

(g) No building permit shall be issued pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section where the cost of the work is thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) or more, other than for improvements to an existing single-family residential dwelling unit as defined in G.S. 87-15.5(7) that the owner occupies as a residence, or for the addition of an accessory building or accessory structure as defined in the North Carolina Uniform Residential Building Code, the use of which is incidental to that residential dwelling unit, unless the name, physical and mailing address,

telephone number, facsimile number, and electronic mail address of the lien agent designated by the owner pursuant to G.S. 44A-11.1(a) is conspicuously set forth in the permit or in an attachment thereto. The building permit may contain the lien agent's electronic mail address. The lien agent information for each permit issued pursuant to this subsection shall be maintained by the inspection department in the same manner and in the same location in which it maintains its record of building permits issued. Where the improvements to a real property leasehold are limited to the purchase, transportation, and setup of a manufactured home, as defined in G.S. 143-143.9(6), the purchase price of the manufactured home shall be excluded in determining whether the cost of the work is thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) or more.

(h) No local government may withhold a building permit or certificate of occupancy that otherwise would be eligible to be issued under this section to compel, with respect to another property or parcel, completion of work for a separate permit or compliance with land-use regulations under this Chapter unless otherwise authorized by law or unless the local government reasonably determines the existence of a public safety issue directly related to the issuance of a building permit or certificate of occupancy.

(i) Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor. (2019-111, s. 2.4; 2020-3, s. 4.33(a); 2020-25, ss. 30, 51(a), (b), (d); 2021-192, s. 4(a).)