



# BUILDING DEPARTMENT INFORMATION SHEET

## *Work Exempt from Permits*

Cotati Municipal Code, California State Building Code (CBC Section 105.2), and Cotati Building Division policy exempt certain types of work from building permit requirements. Note that these exceptions are for the permit process only and do not cover the regulations of other departments, homeowner associations, or other regulatory agencies. It is always best to ask if your project requires a permit prior to beginning the construction process. The building permit exceptions are listed as follows:

### **Building:**

1. One-story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the roof area does not exceed 120 square feet. The height of the one-story accessory building shall not exceed 12 feet at any point or as specified by zoning code.
2. Retaining walls that are not over four feet in height, measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge of Class I, II, or III-A liquids.
3. Fences up to 7 feet in height. Check the zoning code for other applicable height limits.
4. Platforms, decks, walks, and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement or story below and are not part of accessible route.
5. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5000 gallons and the height to diameter ratio does not exceed 2:1
6. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R, Division 3 Occupancy (SFD) that are less than 24 inches deep do not exceed 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
7. Nonfixed, and moveable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches high.
8. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
9. Floor sheathing/subfloor repairs up to 10 square feet
10. Minor repairs and replacements of "non-fire rated" sheetrock
11. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
12. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.

13. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support of Group R-3 and U occupancies.
14. Roof repairs or replacements that are less than 25% of existing roof; do not involve the underlying framing; and occur no more than once in a 12-month period
15. Window replacements that do not alter the window frame, nailing flange, or existing weather protection. Replacement of windows and doors with others of the same size, and in the same location when the structural frame of the opening is not altered
16. Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters, and partitions not over 5 '9" in height.

Separate plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits will be required for the above exempted items. Exemptions from the permit requirements 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.

**Electrical:**

1. Replacement of light fixtures or ceiling fans
2. Plug-in appliance replacement (i.e. dishwasher, fridge, washer/dryer)
3. Electrical circuit breaker and fuse replacements, excluding main disconnect replacement.
4. Electrical outlet replacements.
5. Electrical switch replacements in existing boxes
6. Radio and television transmitting stations: The provisions of this code shall not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but do apply to equipment and wiring for a power supply and the installations of towers and antennas.
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8. Temporary testing systems: A permit shall not be required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

**Gas:**

1. Portable heating appliance that is a listed product and will be connected to existing gas piping (i.e. BBQ, pizza oven)
2. Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval or equipment or make such equipment unsafe (i.e. a fan, compressor, or a UL Listed product).

### **Mechanical:**

1. Portable heating appliance.
2. Portable ventilation equipment.
3. Portable cooling unit.
4. Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
5. Replacement of any part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
6. Portable evaporative cooler.
7. Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds (5 kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.

### **Plumbing:**

1. Faucet or toilet repair or replacement.
2. The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste, or vent pipe, provided, however, that if any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste, or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace that same with the new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
3. The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, provided such repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.
4. Landscape irrigation systems when protected by an approved backflow preventer.

**Emergency Repairs.** Where *equipment* replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the *permit* application shall be submitted to the *building official* within the next working business day.

**Repairs.** Application or notice to the building official is not required for structures, replacement of lamps or the connection of *approved* portable electrical equipment to *approved* permanently installed receptacles. Such repairs shall not include the cutting away of a wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include *addition* to, alternation of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electrical wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety.

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