



When do I need a building application?

You must submit a building permit application, and receive an approved permit before commencement of any of the following activities:

- Construction or demolition of a structure.
- Installations or alterations involving the following:
 - the removal or addition of any wall, partition or portion thereof
 - any structural component
 - the repair or replacement of any required component of a fire or smoke rated assembly
 - the alteration of any required means of egress system
 - water supply and distribution system, sanitary drainage system or vent system
 - electric wiring
 - fire protection system, mechanical systems, or fuel supply systems
 - any equipment regulated by the Virginia Building Code
- For change of occupancy, application for a permit shall be made when a new certificate of occupancy is required by the code.
- Removal or disturbing of any asbestos containing materials during the construction or demolition of a building or structure, including additions.

Applications for emergency construction, alterations or equipment replacement must be submitted by the end of the first working day after the day the work commences. In addition, the building official may authorize work to commence pending the receipt of an application or the issuance of a permit.

You do not need a building permit for the following ordinary and minor maintenance:

- Ordinary building maintenance including the following:
 - the repair or replacement of 100 square feet or less of roof covering in one or two-family dwellings
 - the repair or replacement of any existing siding, interior and exterior painting, wall papering, paneling
 - replacement of windows or doors provided no alteration to the framing of the original opening in one or two family dwellings
 - replacement of trim or moldings
 - replacement of kitchen cabinets
 - replacement of flooring or carpet
 - replacement of screens
 - replacement of leaders or gutters

- Ordinary plumbing maintenance including replacement of fixtures and faucets in one and two-family dwellings.
- Ordinary electrical maintenance including replacement of receptacles and switches in one and two-family dwellings.
- Ordinary mechanical maintenance replacement of above-ground existing LP-gas containers of the same capacity in the same location and associated regulators when installed by the serving gas supplier
- Replacement of mechanical appliances provided such equipment is not fueled by gas or oil in one and two-family dwellings.
- Retaining walls less than three feet in height (zoning approval is required).
- Tool sheds and playhouses less than 256 square feet (zoning and/or health department, if applicable, is required).
- Flagpoles 30 feet (9144 mm) or less in height, however zoning approval is required.

With the exception of painting, wall covering, cabinetry, or floor covering, all other commercial work requires permits.

A full list of exemptions can be found in Section 108 of the [Virginia Construction Code](#).

Read more on the [2021 VA Building Code](#)