



**City of South El Monte
Building and Safety Department
Frequently Asked Question**

Why do I need a permit?

A building permit shows that you have complied with the Building Code and the City has approved what you want to build or repair and that your work has been done according to the Official Building Codes and it is a permanent record of all improvements done to your building. Building permits are required to do new work as well as most repair work.

What are building codes?

Building codes are a set of laws that require things to be built in certain ways and with certain materials that have been found to be safe, as defined by the code, and durable so that the work being done will last a long time. Building codes also include codes on plumbing, electrical and other types of work related to construction. As new and improved construction methods and materials are developed, the building codes are changed to require builders to use the improved methods and materials to ensure everyone's safety. You do not need to know all the building codes to get a permit. The inspector will give you information that will show you how to do most of the things you want to do. If you do something incorrectly the inspector will not approve the work until it is done correctly.

Do you always need a permit to do work on your property?

No. There are some things that you can do to your property that do not require a permit or inspection.

Some of those things are:

- Painting the house or other buildings on your property.
- Repairing broken windows.
- Building a fence or block wall not higher than 6 feet (needs to be reviewed by the Planning Division).
- Repairing small holes in your roof.
- Repairing leaky faucets and toilets.
- Sand blasting (AQMD must be notified prior).

Some of the things that always require a permit:

- Any work on water lines.
- Any work on gas lines.
- Any work on wall heaters, furnaces, air conditioners or water heaters.
- Any work on the frame of a home or building.
- Adding, removing or moving the walls inside a home or building.
- Adding, removing or moving of windows or doors, or changing the size of windows and doors.
- Re-roofing your house even if you do not tear off the existing roof covering.

Who is eligible to obtain a permit for your property?

Only the owner of the property or a licensed contractor (with owners consent) may obtain a permit.

Who is responsible for the work?

If you get a permit, you may do all of the work yourself with the help of your family, but you will be responsible if anything goes wrong. If you hire someone other than a member of your family to help you with the work you must have Worker's Compensation Insurance for that person.

If you hire a contractor to do the work for you, California state law requires that the contractor get the permit and be responsible if anything should go wrong. But, to protect yourself you must be sure that the contractor has a proper Contractor's License with his or her name on it, the Worker's Compensation Insurance policy and the building permit. All of these things will have phone numbers listed on them where you can call and check to see if they are valid.

To avoid receiving a citation for doing work without a permit, please call the Planning or the Building and Safety Department at 626.579.6540.