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WHEN DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

A frequently asked question received by the City of Dunn Planning & Inspections Department is: ***"Do I need a permit to build this?"*** The following information should help clarify when a permit is required by the City of Dunn. The first thing that must be clarified is the difference between a building permit and a development permit.

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

The City of Dunn determines the requirements for a development permit within the Dunn city limits and ETJ. This permit allows the applicant to place a building or project within the jurisdiction while insuring that the project adheres to the local zoning ordinances.

Therefore no work of any kind can be done without a permit. However, there is the following exception:

"No permit shall be required for the construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration costing \$15,000 or less in a single family or farm building as long as the work does not include the addition, repair or replacement of load bearing members or structures." (Note that this will not apply to a commercial building.)

BUILDING PERMITS

The North Carolina General Statutes defines when a building permit will be required. The selected excerpts are from NC General Statute 160A-417 - Permits. The following definition should help clarify when a building permit is required from the City of Dunn.

"No person shall commence the construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement, removal, or demolition of any building without a permit."

As long as the project is for a single family dwelling or farm and costs less than \$15,000 and does not involve any load bearing members (footings, floor joists, rafters, beams, girders, exterior walls, or headers) a building permit is NOT required. This will allow simple alterations in the house such as painting, molding, additional walls, or even adding an interior doorway or opening in a non-bearing wall without a permit. (Note: all exterior walls are considered load bearing and will require a permit.)

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE PERMITS

In the case of an accessory structure (detached storage building) for a single family dwelling, there is another exception. A building permit is not required for a detached accessory structure as long as the structure does not *exceed* 12 feet in ANY dimension. Therefore, if a building is only 10 feet wide by 12 feet long by 11 feet tall, a building permit will not be required (A development permit will still be required.)

If the accessory building is located on commercial property it will require a permit regardless of the size. If the building is attached to an existing building it will be classified as an addition and permits will generally be required.

ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING & MECHANICAL PERMITS

ELECTRICAL

Each of these permits will vary slightly, depending on the nature of the work. An electrical permit is required to do ANY work. However, a permit is not required for the replacement of electrical fixtures and components when work is not done within the wall or ceiling cavity or behind the finished wall or ceiling surface.

PLUMBING

A plumbing permit is required if you install, alter, or repair any portion of the water distribution piping, drain piping or vent piping. However, plumbing fixtures (sinks, toilets, etc.) may be replaced without a permit so long as the work does not go beyond the trap seal. The replacement of a water heater will always be considered as altering the distribution lines and will always require permits. Also, any work performed by a Plumbing or Mechanical Contractor that requires a license in that field, will also require a permit regardless of "plumbing fixtures."

MECHANICAL

The mechanical/heating system is similar to the plumbing system in that the vent registers, thermostat, and filters can be changed, but nothing that will alter the original design of the system. The relocation of a duct system to another room will be a design change. Also, as in the plumbing, this is for a one or two family dwelling only. A commercial building will always need a permit.

