Permit Required & Work Exempt from Permit

Effective Date February 1, 2021

Permits required (BMC 15.05.235)

Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the city and obtain the required permit. A separate permit is required for each building or structure.

Work exempt from permit (BMC 15.05.245)

Permits are not required for the following types of work **except** when located in a special flood hazard area or other areas within the city requiring critical area review by the zoning code. Exemptions from permit requirements do not authorize any work to be done in any manner that violates the laws and ordinances of the city of Burien.

Building

- One-story detached accessory structures which are accessory to residential buildings and constructed under the provisions of the International Residential Code, used as tool and storage sheds, tree supported play structures, playhouse and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (18.58 m2) and the structure is located in accordance with all land use regulations.
- Fences 6 feet (1829 mm) or less in height
- Retaining walls which are 4 feet (1219 mm) or less in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids.
- Water tanks not utilized for fire protection water supplies which are supported directly on grade, if the capacity is 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) or less and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
- Sidewalks and driveways that are not part of an accessible route.
- Decks, associated platforms and steps accessory to buildings, which are 30 inches (762 mm) or less above adjacent grade and which are not over any basement or story below and which are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work, provided that existing accessible features are not altered.
- Replacement of nonstructural siding on IRC structures, except for veneer, stucco or “Exterior Finish and Insulation Systems” (EFIS).
- In-kind re-roofing of one- and two-family dwellings provided the roof sheathing is not removed or replaced.
- Swings, slides and other similar playground equipment accessory to a One or Two-Family Dwelling or Group R-3 occupancy.

- Non-fixed and movable cases, counters and partitions 5 feet 9 inches (1753 mm) or less in height.
- Window replacement for IRC structures in Airport Noise Reduction Area 2 or 3, where no alteration of structural members is required, the window U-Values meet the prescriptive requirements of the Washington State Energy Code, the window glazing is not required to be safety glass, and minimum dimensions and placement of any required egress window is not reduced.
- Temporary motion picture, television, and theater stage sets and scenery.
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a One- and Two-Family Dwelling or Group R-3 occupancy, which are less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons (18 925 L) and are installed entirely above ground.
- Shade cloth structures constructed for garden, nursery or agricultural purposes and not including service systems.
- Window awnings that are supported by an exterior wall of One- and Two-Family Dwellings, Group R-3 occupancies, or Group U occupancies and that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Satellite earth station antennas 6-1/2 feet (2 m) or less in diameter or diagonal dimensions in zones other than residential zones.
- Satellite earth station antennas 3-1/4 feet (1m) or less in diameter in residential zones.
- Video programming service antennas 3-1/4 feet (1 m) or less in diameter or diagonal dimension, regardless of zone.
- Job shacks that are placed at the job site during a construction project, for which a permit has been issued or applied, may be allowed on a temporary basis and shall be removed upon final approval of construction. A job shack is a portable structure, for which the primary purpose is to house equipment and supplies and which may serve as a temporary office during construction for the purposes of the construction project.
- Electrical transmission towers and telephone poles, hydraulic flood control structures, and other structures under the control of a public utility or public agency, which are located in a public right of way or public easement.

Plumbing

- The stopping and/or repairing of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipes, provided, however, that should any concealed trap, drain pipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe become defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, the same shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in this code.
- 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 replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes or fixtures.
- Reinstallation or replacement of approved pre-fabricated fixtures that do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves or pipes.

Electrical

- Portable motors or other portable appliances which are energized by means of a cord or cable having an attachment plug end to be connected to an approved receptacle, when that cord or cable is permitted by the National Electrical Code.
- Repair or replacement of fixed motors, transformers, or fixed approved appliances or devices rated fifty amps or less and which are like-in-kind and in the same location.
- Temporary decorative lighting; when used for a period not to exceed ninety days and removed at the conclusion of the ninety-day period.
- Repair or replacement of current-carrying parts of any switch, conductor or control device, which are like-in-kind and in the same location.
- Repair or replacement of attachment plug(s) and associated receptacle(s) rated fifty amperes or less, which are like-in-kind in the same location.
- Repair or replacement of any over current device, which is like-in-kind and in the same location.
- Repair or replacement of electrodes or transformers of the same size and capacity for signs or gas tube systems.
- Removal of electrical wiring.
- Telecommunication outlet installations within individual dwelling units.
- Listed wireless security systems for which power is supplied by a listed Class 2 plug-in transformer and which are installed within dwelling units
- The installation, alteration or repair of electrical wiring, apparatus or equipment or the generation, transmission, distribution or metering of electrical energy or in the operation of signals or the transmission of intelligence, by a public or private utility in the exercise of its function as a serving utility.
- Portable generators serving only cord and plug connected loads supplied through receptacles on the generator.
- Travel trailers.
- Like-in-kind replacement of one or more of the following: contactor, relay, timer, starter, circuit board, or similar control component; household appliance; circuit breaker; fuse; residential luminaire; lamp; snap switch; dimmer; receptacle outlet; thermostat; heating element; luminaire ballast with an exact same ballast; component(s) of electric signs, outline lighting, skeleton neon tubing, when replaced on-site by an appropriate electrical contractor and when the sign, outline lighting or skeleton neon tubing electrical system is not modified; ten horsepower or smaller motor; and induction detection loops that comply with WAC 296-46B-300(2) and are used to control gate access devices.
- All wiring for low voltage installations within a one-family dwelling unit or its accessory structure except wired security, fire or smoke alarm systems, provided the power is supplied by a listed Class 2 power supply and none of the wiring penetrates the wall or ceiling between the dwelling unit and an attached garage, or wall separating two dwelling units.

Mechanical

- Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
- Portable ventilation equipment.
- Portable cooling units.
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping that is within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by this code.
- Replacement of any part which does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.
- Portable evaporative coolers.
- Self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds (4.54 kg) or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (746 W) or less.
- Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected.

Gas

- Portable heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter its approval or make it unsafe.

Grading

- Grading in an isolated, self-contained area, provided that there is no danger to the public and such grading will not adversely affect adjoining properties, as determined by the building official.
- Excavation for construction of a structure permitted under this code.
- Cemetery graves.
- Refuse disposal sites controlled by other regulations.
- Excavations for wells and trenches for utilities.
- Exploratory excavations performed under the direction of a registered design professional.
- An excavation below existing finished grade for basements and footings of an existing building, retaining wall or other structure, for which the structure is authorized by a valid building permit.
- An excavation of less than 50 cubic yards of material, which is less than 2 feet in depth and which does not create a cut slope of a ratio steeper than two horizontal to one vertical.
- A fill of less than 50 cubic yards of material, which is less than 1 foot in depth and placed on natural terrain with a slope flatter than five horizontal to one vertical.