



# Construction Permit Exemptions

Community Development Department • Construction Permits and Inspection Services  
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[www.muscatineiowa.gov/26/Community-Development](http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/26/Community-Development)

## BUILDING PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

### Residential Construction:

- One-story detached accessory structures such as storage sheds, greenhouse, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet.
- Decks not exceeding 200 square feet in area, that are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to a dwelling do not serve an exit door.
- Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- Sidewalks and driveways located within the perimeter of the property lines.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
- Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
- Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached one- and two-family dwellings.
- Window awnings, supported by an exterior wall, that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.

### Commercial Construction:

- One-story detached accessory structures such as storage sheds, greenhouse, playhouses and similar uses, provided that the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet.
- Fences not over 7 feet.
- Oil derricks.
- Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet 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 IIIA liquids.
- Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.
- Sidewalks and driveways not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, countertops and similar finish work.
- Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
- Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, are not greater than 5,000 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
- Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes, not including service systems.
- Window awnings in Group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall, that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support.
- Nonfixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height.

## ELECTRICAL PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

### Residential Construction:

- Listed cord-and-plug connected temporary decorative lighting.
- Reinstallation of attachment plug receptacles but not the outlets therefor.
- Replacement of branch circuit overcurrent devices of the required capacity in the same location.
- Electrical wiring, devices, appliances, apparatus or equipment operating at less than 25 volts and not capable of supplying more than 50 watts of energy.
- Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.

### Commercial Construction:

- Repairs and maintenance – minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
- Radio and television transmitting stations – electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions.

NOTE: Permit is required for equipment and wiring for a power supply and installations of towers and antennas.

- Temporary testing systems – installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical

## MECHANICAL PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

### Residential Construction:

- Portable equipment – heating, cooking or clothes drying appliances, ventilation appliances, cooling units, evaporative coolers and fuel-cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by the IRC.
- Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower or less.

### Commercial Construction:

- Portable equipment – heating appliance, ventilation equipment, cooling unit or evaporative cooler.
- Replacement of any minor part that does not alter approval of equipment or make such equipment unsafe.
- Steam, hot or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment regulated by the IBC.
- Self-contained refrigeration system containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant and actuated by motors of 1 horsepower.

## PLUMBING PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

### Residential Construction:

- 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 the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained.
- 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.

### Commercial Construction:

- 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 the same with new material, such work shall be considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained.
- 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.