



# CITY OF EAST LANSING

Quality Services for a Quality Community

## ***When a Building, Electrical, Plumbing, or Mechanical work does not require a permit.***

We often receive questions about what kind of work can be done without applying for a permit. Keep in mind this is only what is exempted for permits and inspections. A licensed Contractor is required if the work requires a permit and you are not doing the work yourself as a home owner.

Listed below are the exemptions from the 2015 Michigan Residential Code for obtaining permits with comment regarding East Lansing Zoning requirements;

City of East Lansing  
410 Abbot Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823

(517) 319-6871  
[www.cityofeastlansing.com](http://www.cityofeastlansing.com)

### **Building Permits**

**R105.2 Work exempt from permit.** Exemption from the permit requirements of the code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any work to be done in any manner in violation of the provisions of the code or any other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

Building permits shall not be required for any of the following:

- (i) One-story detached accessory structures, if the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet (18.58 m<sup>2</sup>). *Zoning approval is required for all structures.*
- (ii) A fence that is not more than 7 feet (2134 mm) high. "The City of East Lansing limits a fence to 3 feet height in the front yard and 6 feet height in all other yards. See One Pager Plus or contact Zoning for any further clarification."
- (iii) A retaining wall that is not more than 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.  
*Definition of a surcharge- A uniform vertical pressure applied to the ground surface in the vicinity of a retaining wall is called a surcharge load. This surcharge load will result in an additional horizontal pressure on the wall. Calculations. Like the pressure caused by soil, the surcharge lateral earth pressure is related to the vertical.*
- (iv) A water tank supported directly upon grade if the capacity is not more than 5,000 gallons (18 927 L) and the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2 to 1. *Zoning approval is required for all structures*
- (v) A sidewalk and driveway not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above adjacent grade and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route. *Zoning approval is required for all structures*
- (vi) Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and similar finish work. If a counter is reconfigured then an electrical permit would be required to meet the electrical requirements of the Code.
- (vii) A prefabricated swimming pool that is less than 24 inches (610 mm) deep, and not greater than 5,000 gallons (18 927 L), and is installed entirely above ground.
- (viii) Swings and other playground equipment accessory to detached 1- or 2-family dwellings.

(ix) Window awnings in group R-3 and U occupancies, supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches (1372 mm) from the exterior wall and do not require additional support, as applicable in Section 101.2 and group U occupancies.

(x) Decks not exceeding 200 square feet (18.58 m<sup>2</sup>) in area, that are not more than 30 inches (762 mm) above grade at any point as prescribed by Section R312.1.1, are not attached to a dwelling or its accessory structures, are not within 36 inches (914 mm) of a dwelling or its accessory structures, and do not serve any ingress or egress door of the dwelling or its accessory structures *Zoning approval is required for all structures*

Please contact the Building Inspector if you have any questions. 517-319-6921, or email [tschultz@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:tschultz@cityofeastlansing.com)

(b) **Electrical permits** shall not be required, as in accordance with the Michigan electrical code, R408.30801 to R 408.30880, for any of the following:

- (i) Repairs and maintenance: Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles.
- (ii) Radio and television transmitting stations: The provisions of the code do not apply to electrical equipment used for radio and television transmissions, but do apply to equipment and wiring for power supply and to the installation of towers and antennas.
- (iii) Temporary testing systems: A permit is not required for the installation of any temporary system required for the testing or servicing of electrical equipment or apparatus.

Please contact the Electrical Inspector, Bryan Thomas, if you have any questions 517-319-6807 or email [bthomas@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:bthomas@cityofeastlansing.com)

(c) **Mechanical permits** shall not be required for any of the following:

- (i) A portable heating or gas appliance that has inputs of less than 30,000 BTU's per hour.
- (ii) Portable ventilation appliances and equipment.
- (iii) A portable cooling unit.
- (iv) Steam, hot water, or chilled water piping within any heating or cooling equipment or appliances regulated by this code.
- (v) Replacement of any minor part that does not alter the approval of equipment or an appliance or make such equipment or appliance unsafe.
- (vi) A portable evaporative cooler.
- (vii) Self-contained refrigeration systems that contain 10 pounds (4.5 kg) or less of refrigerant, or that are actuated by motors of 1 horsepower (0.75kW) or less.
- (viii) Portable fuel cell appliances that are not connected to a fixed piping system and are not interconnected to a power grid.
- (ix) An oil burner that does not require connection to a flue, such as an oil stove and a heater equipped with a wick.
- (x) A portable gas burner that has inputs of less than 30,000 BTU's per hour.
- (xi) When changing or relocating a gas meter or regulator, a permit is not required when installing gas piping which shall be limited to 10 feet (3005 mm) in length and not more than 6 fittings.
- (xii) When installing geothermal vertical closed loops under the supervision of a mechanical contractor licensed in HVAC as long as the company meets both the following:
  - (A) Has obtained a certificate of registration as a well drilling contractor pursuant to part 127 of the public health code, 1978, PA 368, MCL 333.12701 to 333.12771.
  - (B) Has installed the geothermal vertical closed loops in accordance with the department of environmental quality's best practices regarding geothermal heat pump closed loops.Exemption from the permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for work to be done in violation of the provisions of this code or other laws or ordinances of this jurisdiction.

Please contact the Mechanical Inspector, Joe Hardin, if you have any questions 517-319-6983 or email [jhardin@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:jhardin@cityofeastlansing.com)

(d) **Plumbing permits** shall not be required for either of the following:

(i) The stopping of leaks in drains, water, soil, waste or vent pipe. If any concealed trap, drainpipe, water, soil, waste or vent pipe becomes defective and it becomes necessary to remove and replace the same with new material, then the work is considered as new work and a permit shall be obtained and inspection made as provided in the code.

(ii) The clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves, or fixtures, and the removal and reinstallation of water closets, if the repairs do not involve or require the replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.

Please contact the Plumbing Inspector, Barry Penix, if you have any questions 517-319-6816 or email [bpsenix@cityofeastlansing.com](mailto:bpsenix@cityofeastlansing.com)

**R105.2.1 Emergency repairs.** Where *equipment* replacements and repairs must be performed in an emergency situation, the *permit* application shall be submitted within the next working business day to the *building official*.

**R105.2.2 Repairs.** Application or notice to the *building official* is not required for ordinary repairs to structures, replacement of lamps or the connection of *approved* portable electrical *equipment* to *approved* permanently installed receptacles. Such repairs shall not include the cutting away of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include *addition* to, *alteration* of, replacement or relocation of any water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical or other work affecting public health or general safety.

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