St. Louis County Department of Public Works
Division of Code Enforcement

When is an Electrical Permit required for Residential Projects?

ELECTRICAL WORK

An Electrical Permit is required to install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace equipment, panels, material, wiring, fixtures or any other component of an electrical system.

Some examples of typical residential electrical projects that require an Electrical Permit are: new house construction, fix-up/rehabilitation repair type projects, enlarging or renovating a house, remodeling kitchens or bathrooms, finishing basements, replacing the service entrance, replacing/enlarging distribution/breaker panels, adding new circuits, adding new wiring/fixtures to existing circuits, installing a swimming pool, installing electric to an accessory structure or backyard outdoor kitchen, electrical solar array panels, etc. For additional information on permit requirements refer to the Residential Guides on our website at www.stlouisco.com/YourGovernment/CountyDepartments/PublicWorks.

With respect to repairs, an Electrical Permit is required to repair the electrical system in a building or structure that has been damaged from fire, flood, or severe wind; and as part of a fix-up/rehabilitation building project, to repair or replace components of a electrical system that have not been maintained in good condition due to lack of on-going maintenance or neglect.

Residential building projects within unincorporated county & contracting municipalities that include electrical work are issued as an Integrated Building Permit (one permit for the entire job). Electrical work must be done by a licensed Electrical Contractor or a qualifying homeowner for certain limited electrical work.

The following types of work are considered ordinary repairs or minor work for which an Electrical Permit will not be required, provided such ordinary repairs are regularly performed as on-going continued maintenance for the purpose of maintaining the building's electrical system in good condition and no aluminum branch circuit wiring is present on the premise:

1. Replacing defective fuses, switches, receptacles, light fixtures like for like within existing pre-wired boxes (Reconfiguring kitchen cabinet & bathroom layouts will likely trigger code required changes to electrical receptacle locations and associated new wiring.) An electrical permit is required to install new wiring or to install a GFCI type receptacle in an existing pre-wired box where a non-GFCI type receptacle was installed originally because the existing device box is most likely not adequately sized for the GFCI and the conductors. The volume of the box must be determined which usually results in changing the device box and rerouting the cables to prevent damage to the conductor insulation and excessive heat buildup.
2. Replacing defective garbage disposals, dishwashers, kitchen & bathroom exhaust fans like-for-like in the same location provided they can be re-connected to existing wiring

without modifications and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. (Caution: Dishwasher replacements must be done by a Master Plumber who is required to submit a Certificate of Replacement to the County);

3. Installing a ceiling fan at an existing light outlet location provided the existing box is listed for fan installations and is securely anchored to the ceiling framing above. Listed fan boxes have bolts that secure the mounting plate to the box, not screws and will be marked fan support rated (Note: New wiring requires an electrical permit.);
4. Installing a communication system, security/alarm system operating at 24 volts or less within an existing single family dwelling, two-family dwelling, or townhouses.
5. Installing or replacing landscape lighting serving a single family dwelling, two-family dwelling , or a townhouse provided all of the following:
    - The lighting system is listed as an assembly and shipped with all components in the package, container or box including a listed class II power supply and the wiring.
    - The lighting system operates at 24 or less volts.
    - The power supply plugs into an existing GFCI protected receptacle without the use of an extension cord.
    - If the receptacle is located in a wet area the weatherproof cover must be suitable for use in a wet location while in use.