



**Snohomish County**  
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#### PERMIT SUBMITTAL

Appointment  
425.388.3311  
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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

# Common Building Permit Exemptions

Assistance Bulletin

# #74

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## **Q:** What work in unincorporated Snohomish County does not require a building permit?

**A:** The following is a list of exemptions for permits. Please keep in mind though, that while you may be exempt from a permit, you may still be required to obtain other types of permits and/or approvals. For example, you may not need a building permit to build a 100 square foot shed on your property, but you will still be required to meet structure setback requirements from property lines required by the zoning code and the structure must still comply with building code regulations. If your property is located in a flood hazard zone, a flood hazard permit is still required.

While this may not be a complete list, it is intended to provide you with the most common permit exemptions.

- Single-story sheds, playhouses, agricultural structures and similar structures, not used for human-habitation provided they do not exceed 200 square feet in floor area if you are located inside an Urban Growth Area (UGA) or 400 square feet in floor area if you are located outside a UGA. Up to 24" roof overhang is permitted.
- Carports and patio covers not attached to a dwelling, provided they do not exceed 200 square feet if you are located inside an Urban Growth Area (UGA) or 400 square feet if you are located outside a UGA.
- Retail stands such as espresso stands, concession stands, and fireworks stands that do not exceed 200 square feet. (May require approval from the Snohomish Health District; may be subject to driveway access regulations).
- Fences 6' or less in height.
- Retaining walls and rockeries that are 4' or less in height (as measured from the top of the wall to the base of the footing) that does not support a surcharge or impounds Class I, II or III-A liquids.
- Water tanks supported on grade with a capacity of 5,000 gallons or less and where the ratio of height to diameter (or width) does not exceed 2:1.
- Sidewalks and driveways associated with residential buildings.
- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, installation of cabinets or counter tops, and similar finish work.
- Replacement of exterior siding.
- Temporary movie, TV, and theater stage sets and scenery.

**This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.**

- Prefabricated, above ground swimming pools, 24” or less in depth, that does not exceed 5,000 gallons, and are accessory to a single family home or duplex.
- Shade cloth structures for nursery or agricultural purposes.
- Window replacement—direct replacement with no structural changes.
- Re-roofs of 10 squares or less.
- Deck steps and porches not exceeding 30” above grade.
- Swings and other playground equipment.
- Window awnings for single family homes or duplexes, supported by an exterior wall that does not project more than 54” from the wall and does not require additional support of the structure.
- Non-fixed and movable fixtures such as cases, racks, counters, and partitions not over 5’9” in height.
- Job shacks that are placed at the job site during construction and removed upon completion of the construction.
- Tents and canopies—tents less than 200 square feet and canopies less than 400 square feet.
- Membrane structures such as those used as temporary growing structures for commercial production of plants, flowers, vegetables, and fruits.
- Agricultural buildings which are covered on the roof and sides with polyethylene, polyvinyl or similar synthetic material—size limitations are as follows:

5 acres .....	1,000 square feet
10 acres .....	2,000 square feet
15 acres .....	3,000 square feet
20 acres .....	4,000 square feet, or
25 acres or more ....	5,000 square feet

- Portable heating appliances.
- Propane tanks under 125 gallons. A gas piping permit is required for any interior and/or exterior gas piping installations.
- Portable ventilation or cooling units.
- Portable evaporative cooler.
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures—like for like.
- Repair of plumbing leaks that does not require removal of existing traps, drain pipes, etc.
- Repair or clearing of stoppages that doesn’t involve the removal and replacement or rearrangement of valves, pipes, or fixtures.
- Removal of buildings such as tool sheds; play houses, and similar type structures.
- Demolition of a building that is being replaced with a new building in the same location and demolition is covered by the new building’s permit.
- Driveways that connect to a private road.

## Rules for Residential Buildings Exempt from a Building Permit

Exempt buildings include one-story \*detached accessory structures not used for human habitation and used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses provided the floor area does not exceed 200 square feet for structures located within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) and 400 square feet for structures located outside the UGA. Free standing carports and patio covers meeting these requirements are included structures.

If the exempt structure is to be located on property in a flood hazard zone, a flood hazard permit is required.

\*A **story** is defined as that portion of a building included between the upper surface of a floor and the upper surface of the floor or roof next above.

## Common Building Permit Exemptions

### Zoning

- Exempt structures are required to meet setback distances to property lines per zoning code and setbacks to Critical Areas such as steep slopes, streams, lakes, or wetlands.
- No setback distance is required between individual exempt structures or between exempt structures and dwellings or other permitted structures. Individual exempt structures shall be structurally independent and may not be attached to other structures.

### Construction

- Exempt structures must comply with building code regulations.
- Maximum 10 foot high studs may be used.
- A storage loft/mezzanine is allowed as long as the area of the loft/mezzanine area does not exceed 1/3 the building footprint.
- Eaves may extend maximum 24 inches past the exterior walls.
- Detached tool sheds and storage sheds, playhouses and similar structures exempted from permits are not required to provide wall protection (at exterior walls) based on location on the lot.
- Per Table R302.6 a garage located less than 3 feet from a dwelling unit on the same lot is required to have not less than ½-inch gypsum wall board or equivalent applied to the interior side of exterior walls that are within this area.

You may also contact us if you have any questions via:

Email: [PermitTech@snoco.org](mailto:PermitTech@snoco.org)

Telephone: 425-388-3311

Visit us at: 2nd Floor, Robert J. Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller Avenue, Everett

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