

## PERMITS UNDER THE BUILDING DISCIPLINE

### PURPOSE

To provide guidance on the application of the Permit Regulation (the Regulation) with regards to work undertaken in the building discipline.

### DISCUSSION

The [Regulation](#) requires permits be obtained for work undertaken in various disciplines. Regarding the building discipline, a permit is generally required for the construction of a building (including the renovation of or addition to a building) and is always required for a change in the occupancy classification of a building, as per Subsection 6(1) of the Regulation. The Regulation also lists – under Subsection 6(3) - a number of specific types of work which do not require a permit.

| Examples of Types of Work Under the Building Discipline  | Permit Required    |
|--|--------------------|
| Construction, Renovation, or Addition  | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Change of Occupancy/Use  | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Refrigeration  | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| HVAC – Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning   | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Fire Alarm Systems   | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Fire Sprinkler System  | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Elevator-Installation/Modernization/Upgrades   | Yes <sup>(1)</sup> |
| Re-roofing or re-siding  | No <sup>(2)</sup>  |
| Replace or alter ducting serving a space heating appliance in a single family dwelling                                 | No <sup>(2)</sup>  |
| Construction of an exterior deck serving a single family dwelling that is not greater than 600 mm from adjacent grade  | No <sup>(2)</sup>  |
| Construction of an accessory building not greater than 10m <sup>2</sup> in building area that does not create a hazard | No <sup>(3)</sup>  |

Unless stated otherwise, all Code references in this STANDATA are to Division B of the National Building Code-2019 Alberta Edition

Issuance of this STANDATA is authorized by  
the Provincial Building Administrator



*[Original Signed]*  
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**Notes:**

(1) “Yes” does not mean a permit is always required. Although it is likely a permit will be required, owners and/or designers should read Subsection 6(3) of the Regulation to determine if the exceptions apply to the scope of their proposed work. If it is still unclear, consult the local authority having jurisdiction.

(2) “No” does not mean a permit is never required. Owners and/or designers should read Subsection 6(3) of the Regulation to determine if the scope of their proposed work is outside of the listed exceptions. If it is still unclear, consult the local authority having jurisdiction.

(3) Consult the local authority having jurisdiction regarding whether or not they believe the proposed accessory building creates a hazard.

**Construction, Renovation or Addition**

The construction of or addition to a building almost always requires a permit: the exceptions of Subsection 6(3) of the Regulation do apply to construction of or addition to a building, but the criteria that the proposed work must meet is difficult to associate to the construction of a building or addition to one. The renovation of a building may not require a permit if its scope complies with certain criteria stipulated in Subsection 6(3) of the Regulation:

- The building is not a stage or tent or an overhead structure that is used in or intended to be used in conjunction with a stage or tent,
- The renovation does not exceed \$5,000 in prevailing market value, and
- Matters affecting health and safety are not at risk.

**Change of Occupancy/Use**

Occupancy means the use or intended use of a building or part thereof for the shelter or support of persons, animals or property. When the occupancy of a building or space within a building is changed, it is likely the change triggers requirements of the National Building Code – 2019 Alberta Edition (NBC(AE)) to then apply, where they did not previously apply under the prior occupancy.

**Refrigeration**

“Trade” means the occupation of [refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic](#) designated as a compulsory certification trade pursuant to the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act*.

Refrigeration systems with refrigeration capacity exceeding 10.5 kilowatts or portions thereof fall under the scope of pressure equipment in which a certificate of inspection permit may be required prior to the installation of an item(s) pressure equipment\*and placed into service.

Some pressure vessels in refrigeration systems may not require a certificate of inspection permit according to Section 33(2) of Pressure Equipment Safety Regulation but must meet all the other requirements of the Pressure Equipment Safety Regulation.

To obtain more information or a certificate of inspection or authorization permit, contact the [Alberta Boilers Safety Association](#) (ABSA)

\*For the context of this STANDATA, it should be noted that pressure piping may also require a Certificate of Authorization Permit from ABSA to construct or repair.

Note: Typically “(Self-contained units 5 kilowatts (6.7 HP) or less would be exempt and not require permits) See Appendix A”

### **HVAC Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning**

“Trade” means the occupation of [sheet metal worker](#) and [refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic](#) designated as a compulsory certification trade pursuant to the [Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act](#);

Under the above noted trade regulations certain aspects of cross-discipline work are allowed as related to HVAC such as:

- Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics are qualified in maintaining and repairing refrigeration and air conditioning units, appliances and accessories designed for the utilization of natural or propane gas as a fuel for heating or cooling that do not exceed 400,000 BTU (117 kW) input;
- Sheet metal workers are qualified for installing residential split system air conditioning systems of up to 5 tons total capacity per system;

### **Fire Alarm Systems**

“Trade” means the occupation of [electrician](#) designated as a compulsory certification trade pursuant to the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act*.

A Building Permit is applicable for the building safety codes officer to assess the applicable requirements for the fire alarm system as required by the NBC(AE)

An electrical permit is also required for work on fire alarm systems falling under Section 8 & 9 of the Regulation as well as Section 32 of the Canadian Electrical Code, Part 1.

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/standata-electrical-safety-information-bulletin-legislation-certification-and-permit-regulation>

Note: This table provides general guidance when work on a fire alarm system requires a building permit. See Appendix B

### **Fire Sprinkler System**

Qualified personnel as per the Authority Having Jurisdiction to obtain required Permit.

“Trade” means the occupation of [sprinkler systems installer](#) designated as an optional certification trade pursuant to the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act*.

### **Fire Suppression System**

Qualified personnel as per the Authority Having Jurisdiction to obtain required Permit.

### **Elevator Installation/Modernization/Upgrades**

“Trade” means the occupation of [elevator constructor](#) that is designated as a compulsory certification trade pursuant to the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act*.

A Building Permit is applicable for the building safety codes officer to assess the applicable requirements for barrier-free, fire alarm interface, elevator car size and signage.

[19-FCI-016/19-BCI-022/13-EDI-001/18-CECI-007 Existing Elevator Modernization-Fire Alarm Interface](#)

To obtain more information on a permit of operation or construction/alterations for elevating devices, contact the [Alberta Elevating Devices & Amusement Rides Safety Association \(AEDARSA\)](#)

**Re-Roofing or Re-Siding**

When removing existing roofing or siding materials with the intent of replacing them with similar types of materials for aesthetic or maintenance purposes, the Regulation does not require a permit be obtained as long as matters affecting health or safety are not at risk, and there is no structural change to the building.

**Replace or Alter Ducting Serving a Space Heating Appliance**

When replacing or altering ducting serving a space heating appliance, the Regulation does not require a permit be obtained as long as the appliance is located in a single family residential dwelling and there is no design change required to the heating and ventilation system.

**Construction of an Exterior Deck Serving a Single Family Dwelling That is Not Greater Than 600 mm From Adjacent Grade**

When constructing an exterior deck that will be either attached or detached from a single family dwelling, the Regulation does not require a permit be obtained where the deck is not greater than 600 mm from the adjacent grade on all sides.

**Construction of an Accessory Building Not Greater Than 10m<sup>2</sup> in Building Area That Does Not Create a Hazard**

When an accessory building is to comprise of a building area not greater than 10m<sup>2</sup> and does not create a hazard, a permit is not required to be obtained. Although the Regulation does not allude to this, the NBC(AE) states it does not apply to such accessory buildings, and Subsection 6(1) of the Regulation states a permit is required for any construction to which the NBC(AE) applies.

**Always check with the Authority Having Jurisdiction within your municipality for required permits.**

For more information about where to get a permit, please visit the [Safety Codes Council website](#)

**Disclaimer:**

The information in this bulletin is not intended to provide professional design advice. If professional expertise is required with respect to a specific issue or circumstance, the services of a professional should be sought.

## Appendix A

- **Self-Contained Refrigeration** is convenient and suitable for almost any application, offering simple “plug and play” operation that should not require any technical work. “Self-contained refrigeration units” are ready built (manufactured) and come in many shapes and sizes. Typically used by retail stores and markets, hotels, restaurants, grocery stores and institutions for the processing, storing, displaying, and dispensing of perishable commodities and can range from small commercial fridges and back bar coolers to refrigerated display cases like you see in convenience stores, to larger packaged units that would sit on top of a walk-in cooler or freezer. Most of the smaller commercial coolers/freezers have self-contained refrigeration systems, which means the entire system, from condenser to evaporator, is built into the cabinet.
  - The condenser can be located on the top, the bottom, or even the sides or back of a commercial cooler/freezer on the outer side of the unit.
  - The evaporator is located on the inside of the cabinet/unit and usually mounted in the upper section, however, some may be in alternate positions inside depending on system design.
  - The condenser and evaporator are connected by tubes (Usually copper or aluminum) carrying refrigerant/coolant that transfers heat and enables the system to ensure proper holding temperatures for product such as food storage.
  - Self-contained systems typically range up to approximately 3 kW (4 HP), however, some may come in sizes larger than 3 kilowatt (4 HP) and may not be exempt.
- **Self-Contained Refrigeration** equipment includes but not limited to the following examples:
  - Commercial Refrigerators (Glass/Solid - Reach-in coolers/freezers)
  - Refrigerated Pizza Prep Tables
  - Sandwich Prep Tables
  - Ice Machine (Packaged)
  - Back Bar Refrigerators
  - Glass Frosters
  - Island Merchandizers
  - Under Counter Freezers
  - Ice-Cream Freezers - Dipping Cabinets
  - Floral Reach-in Coolers

## Appendix B

| Scope of Work-Fire Alarm System  | Control Panel / Circuit Type                  | Building Permit  | Electrical Permit |
|--|---|--|-------------------|
| New Construction Installation  | Any   | Yes  | Yes               |
| Replacement of a fire alarm control unit   | Emergency - Like for Like - Conventional      | Yes  | Yes               |
|  | Emergency - Like for Like - CPU Based         |  |                   |
|  | Upgrade (Emergency or Planned) - Conventional |  |                   |
|  | Upgrade (Emergency or Planned) - CPU Based    |  |                   |
| Upgrading of existing fire alarm devices only from conventional to addressable   | Any   | Yes  | Yes               |
| Addition of fire alarm devices to an existing system   | Conventional                                  | Yes  | Yes               |
|  | Addressable                                   |  |                   |
| Deletion of fire alarm devices from an existing system   | Conventional                                  | Yes  | No                |
|  | Addressable                                   |  |                   |
| Replacement of fire alarm devices (repairs - identical field device)   | Conventional                                  | No   | No                |
|  | Addressable                                   |  |                   |
| Replacement of fire alarm devices (repairs - similar field device - ie spot type smoke)                                    | Conventional                                  | No   | No                |
|  | Addressable                                   |  |                   |
| Modernization of a fire alarm system including control unit and devices  | Any   | Yes  | Yes               |
| Replacement of a fire alarm control unit internal module or component (repair)   | Any   | No   | No                |
| Modification of an existing fire alarm control unit (addition / removal of components / features)                          | Any   | Yes  | No                |
| Programming (software changes) to the fire alarm system. This may or may not include changes to the sequence of operation. | Any   | Yes where SoO or System Capabilities affected. Label change - No | No                |