



County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services  
**HOMEOWNER'S & BUSINESS OWNER'S RELIEF ACT**  
**BUILDING DIVISION**

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On October 11, 1995, the Board of Supervisors took action to reduce or eliminate building permit requirements and/or building permit fees for certain building permits associated with single-family dwellings and duplexes. Effective November 16, 1995 (**Homeowner's Relief Act**), the following are exempt from the permit process (no plan check or permit fees, no plan review or inspections):

- Carports of 300 square feet or less (must meet setback requirements)
- Patio covers of 300 square feet or less (must meet setback requirements)
- Driveways when associated with a residential building permit

Certain permits accessory to a single family dwelling, duplex or mobilehome will not pay plan check fees if the structure is built to County standard plans:

- Carports over 300 square feet
- Patio covers over 300 square feet
- Fireplaces
- Retaining walls
- Seismic retrofits

Effective November 16, 1995 (**Homeowner's Relief Act**), and June 9, 1998 (**Business Owner's Relief Act**), the following building permits will not require fees for permits, plan review, and/or inspections. However, a no-fee permit must be obtained, and all applicable inspections are still required. In some cases, State and other local agency fees are applicable.

- Sea cargo containers of 320 square feet or less when used for storage
- Exterior siding or plastering (NOTE: Projects in a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) area shall meet section 92.1.707A of the County Building Code.)
- Replacement or repair of interior drywall when on a wall or ceiling not required to be fire rated
- Skylights approved by ICC or a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NOTE: Skylights on projects in a WUI area shall be tempered glass per section 92.1.705A.5 of the County Building Code.)
- Non-masonry fencing and free-standing walls
- Water heater replacement (no modification or alteration of the electrical or gas system)
- Emergency gas line repair
- Electric heat pumps and air conditioner replacement (no alteration to the existing electrical system)
- Residential photovoltaic electrical systems (effective September, 2001) and solar water heaters
- Window replacements with the same net openable area (NOTE: Replacement windows shall comply with all of the following: 1) Windows shall meet prescriptive U-Factor and SHGC limits specified in the *California Building Energy Efficiency Standards* for the applicable climate zone (see PDS #409); 2) Windows on projects in a WUI area shall be dual-glazed with a minimum of one tempered pane or 20-minute fire-rated per section 92.1.708A.2.1 of the County Building Code; 3) Windows serving as emergency egress openings shall meet section R310.1 of the *California Residential Code* or section 1030 of the *California Building Code*, as applicable.)
- Door replacements that are not required to be fire-rated
- Replacement of roofing material (no alteration to the existing roof structure) (NOTE: Roof material shall have a Class 'A' Fire Rating.)
- Lawn sprinkler systems
- Abandonment of septic system and connection to public sewer
- Residential small wind turbine systems (effective April, 2008)

**Elimination of the requirement for building permits for any construction work will not exempt you from complying with the zoning ordinance, Public Health and Safety Codes, or any other county, State, or Federal Regulations.**

**The policy of Planning & Development Services, Building Division, is that if you "turn yourself in" for a violation (meaning no enforcement action has been taken by our staff), the investigation fee is not imposed.**