

Allowed Improvements within a Permit Exempt Structure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a guideline for approving the installation of electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems within or servicing a structure less than 120 square feet in size.

GENERAL

The California Building Code Section 106.2(1) exempts single-story detached accessory building(s) used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses, and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet from required building permits. The section further states that plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits are required for permit exempt structures. Local and adopted codes are silent regarding the allowed installation of plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems within these structures.

The intent of this exemption is to allow the construction of minor accessory structures that have limited entry to be constructed with a minimum of regulations. Exemption from a building permit does not exempt a building from Planning or Emergency Services regulations, nor does it exempt a structure from minimum construction standards.

Limited entry uses are considered to be pump houses, tool sheds, equipment enclosures, storage sheds or any other use where a person will spend a relatively short period of time within the structure. Special consideration may be given to play houses to allow longer periods of time within the structure.

AUTHORITY

Section 104 California Building Code.

FORMS

Permit application form

PROCEDURE

A. Electrification

1. Electrical services shall not be limited in size or amperage and may be attached to an exempt structure. Services shall be grounded in accordance with California Electrical Code (CEC).

2. Panelboards are allowed and may be located as specified in the CEC.
3. Branch circuits shall be allowed to serve specified authorized uses or appliances. Only one general lighting circuit may be allowed.
4. Outlet boxes may be allowed to serve a specific authorized use, such as a work bench or dedicated piece of equipment. Placement of outlet boxes per article 210-52 CEC (residential spacing) shall not be allowed. Allowed receptacles shall be located at least 18 inches above the floor.
5. Specific electrical appliances may be approved if justification can be given (i.e. electrical water heater, pool pump etc.)

B. Mechanical Systems

1. Solid fuel burning heaters, forced air systems, heat exchangers and associated ducting shall not be allowed in exempt structures for comfort heating of the exempt structure. However, they may be allowed within an exempt structure to support a permitted structure.
2. Residential type wall furnaces shall not be allowed in exempt structures for comfort heating.
3. Small ceramic kilns may be allowed in exempt structures in accordance with the California Mechanical Code.
4. Coolers, compressors, heaters, or heat pumps or similar mechanical equipment may be allowed to support a permitted structure. Any equipment installed must comply with the California Energy Code requirements for energy efficiency. Thermal or acoustical insulation may be approved to support the equipment installation.

C. Water Systems

1. Waste water piping shall be specifically prohibited within an exempt structure. For the purposes of this policy, “within” shall mean within the footing of the structure, under the roof canopy or within 2 feet of the roof canopy.
2. Installation of plumbing fixtures consisting of sinks, tubs, showers or any other fixture requiring connection to waste piping or a sanitary sewer systems are prohibited. Floor drains may be installed for the collection of rain water.
3. Hot water heaters may be allowed within exempt structures to support a permitted structure.

Approved by:

/s/ Pete Parkinson

Pete Parkinson, Director

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