

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 23, 2022

TO: ALL PERMIT CENTER CUSTOMERS AND STAFF

FROM: WAYNE LIGHTFOOT, PERMIT CENTER DIVISION CHIEF,
DEPARTMENT OF CODE ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: ALTERATIONS WITHIN CONDOMINIUM UNITS

A condominium (condo) unit owner has the right to make improvements and alterations within their own unit but must do so in accordance with the condo association's governing documents. An owner who chooses to complete proposed work themselves are not subject to licensure or certification as a contractor or subcontractor pursuant to Chapter 11 of title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia. However, the owner must meet all requirements of the most current Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) and obtain all required permits prior to the commencement of any work.

It is strongly recommended that a contractor be the responsible party to secure permits required by the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. When contractors apply for permits, the city will verify that he/she is properly licensed by the State of Virginia and the City of Alexandria to perform the intended work. Usually, unwillingness by the contractor to obtain required permits may be an indication that he/she is not properly licensed.

All renovations that propose the modification of load bearing elements such as floor and roof assemblies, beams and girders, bearing and shear walls, and columns are required to be prepared by a Virginia Registered Design Professional (RDP). A Virginia Registered Design Professional is typically defined as a registered Architect or Professional Engineer. An alternative to having an architect's or engineer's (A/E) seal on drawings for proposed construction is to have a (A/E) signed and sealed letter stating that the proposed work will be conducted under his/her supervision.

Additionally, a means of egress shall not be altered in a manner that will reduce the number of exits, the minimum width of the pathway, or the required capacity of the means of egress to less than that required by the current code. Fire-rated assemblies that serve multiple purposes in a building shall comply with all requirements applicable for each individual fire assembly. Also note that all new penetrations through existing floor or wall assemblies shall be protected by listed fire-stop systems, which must be indicated in the proposed drawings at submission of the permit application.

WORK CONSIDERED AS “ORDINARY REPAIRS” CAN BE COMPLETED IN A CONDOMINIUM UNIT WITHOUT OBTAINING A PERMIT.

In accordance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), application for a permit and any related inspections shall not be required for work listed in section 108.2 (Exemptions from application for permit). However, when an *owner* or an *owner's* agent requests that a permit be issued for any work listed in this section, then a permit shall be issued and any related inspections shall be required.

Ordinary repairs exempt from application for permit include the following:

- Replacement of plumbing fixtures and well pumps in all groups without alteration of the water supply and distribution systems, sanitary drainage systems or vent systems.
- Replacement of general use snap switches, dimmer, and control switches, 125 volt-15 or 20 ampere receptacles, luminaires (lighting fixtures) and ceiling (paddle) fans.
- Replacement of mechanical appliances provided such equipment is not fueled by gas or oil.
- Installation or replacement of floor finishes.
- Replacement of Class C interior wall or ceiling finishes.
- Installation or replacement of cabinetry or trim.
- Application of paint or wallpaper.
- Other repair work deemed by the building official to be minor and ordinary which does not adversely affect public health or general safety.

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT

All customers should register on the Alexandria Permit and Land Use Management Portal. We are encouraging all customers to utilize the portal, not only to apply for permits, but also as a tool to process permit related payments.

[APEX](#) allows customers to apply for permits and development plan reviews, to attach supporting documents and to submit payment from computers or mobile devices, eliminating the need to make trips to City Hall. Use the following links to get started with your permit application.

<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/code/info/registrationinstructions.pdf>

https://apex.alexandriava.gov/EnerGov_Prod/SelfService#/home

Condominium owners who choose to serve as their own general contractor must submit a written statement at permit application that is available at the following link:

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/code/info/WrittenStatementperUSBC1084.pdf>