

MINOR AND MAJOR KITCHEN/BATHROOM REMODELS



Depending on the project scope, improvements to your kitchen or bathroom may qualify as either a minor or major remodel. This bulletin helps you understand the difference and the permit process to use.

MINOR VS. MAJOR REMODELS

About cosmetic work. First, please note that cosmetic changes, such as surface improvements or minor replacements, do not require a permit. As explained in our bulletin, [Projects That Don't Need a Permit](#), surface improvements include:

- Cabinet refacing or replacement without structural, electrical or plumbing changes.
- Countertop or tile installations.
- Flooring installations of any size or floor sheathing repairs up to 10 sq. ft.
- Painting or non-rated sheetrock locations.

Minor replacements include:

- Appliance repairs that do not alter the appliance's original approval and listing.
- Replacing electrical outlets, switches in their existing boxes, circuit breakers, or fuses.
- Replacing or repairing faucets or toilets.
- Window replacements that do not alter the window frame, nailing flange, or existing weather protection. See also our bulletin on [Window Replacement Requirements](#).

The above types of cosmetic improvements do not need to be included in your scope of work to the City for any remodeling project. For kitchen and bathroom remodeling projects, please note the difference between a Minor and Major remodel as outlined below:

MINOR KITCHEN/BATHROOM REMODEL PROJECT SCOPE	MAJOR KITCHEN/BATHROOM REMODEL PROJECT SCOPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Minor Remodel Permit allows for multiple fixture/appliance replacements that involve new electrical, plumbing, and/or mechanical work without changes to the number or location of fixtures/appliances. • No structural changes — meaning no changes to walls, windows, or framing. • Any improvement outside of the kitchen/bathroom area must be permitted separately. • Plans are not needed for permit issuance. Download the Minor Kitchen/Bath Permit at SJPermits.org. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Major Remodel Permit is needed for projects that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Change the configuration of walls or windows, or that modify the framing of ceilings, walls, windows, or floors, and/or: – Relocate or increase the number of fixtures/appliances • Projects that include any of the above require plans and plan review for permit issuance. • Go to www.sanjoseca.gov/BuildingPermitServices for instructions on how to prepare and submit your plans and permit application.

Important: If the City inspector finds remodeling work that involves structural changes on a project that pulled a minor remodeling permit, you will be required to submit plans and undertake the plan review process for a Major Remodel.

TO GET A PERMIT

For a minor remodel, select Minor Kitchen/Bath Permit and pay for and download the permit at [www.SJPermits.org](#).

See the [instructional video](#) for help.

For a major remodel, go to [www.sanjoseca.gov/BuildingPermitServices](#) and determine if your project qualifies for the OTC or Regular Plan Review permit service.

TO SCHEDULE AN INSPECTION

Call us at 408-535-3555 or schedule the inspection at [www.SJPermits.org](#).

PERMIT FEES

For Minor Remodels, see the fee at [www.SJPermits.org](#). For Major Remodels, see the [Building Fee Schedule](#).

Development Services Permit Center

San José City Hall
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San José, CA 95113
408-535-3555
[www.sanjoseca.gov/PermitCenter](#)

CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR KITCHEN/BATH REMODELS

Please be mindful of these considerations when remodeling a kitchen and/or bathroom:

Kitchens and Bathrooms

1. **Floodplain locations.** If the project is in a building in a floodplain, show how wall finishes below floodplain meet. CRC R322.1.8.
2. **Rough & final inspections required** — For major remodels, plan to provide inspection of all roughs (such as for tub/shower inspection) and then again for all finals.
3. **Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.** You will need to show the Inspector smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the following locations: In each sleeping room; outside each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms; and on each additional story of the dwelling. Provide the Inspector with a completed [Affidavit of Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Installation](#). CRC R315.

Just Kitchens

4. **Exhaust fans** - Provide the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) report for kitchen exhaust fans. Fans must be ducted to the exterior.
5. **Exhaust hood replacement** - Requires a third-party HERS report, 100 CFM, and Energy Star compliant equipment.

Just Bathrooms

6. **Lighting switching devices and controls** - At least one luminaire in the bathroom must be controlled by an occupant or vacancy sensory providing automatic-off functionality. If an occupant sensor is installed, it shall be initially configured to manual-on operation using the manual control required under Section 150.0(k)2C.
7. **Shower pan** - Pan dimensions must be a minimum area of 1,024 sq. inches and a minimum finish dimension of 30" in any direction. CPC 408.6
8. **Shower doors** - Must open with a minimum 22" unobstructed opening for egress. CPC 408.5
9. **Toilet space** - Clear space around a toilet must measure a minimum 15" from centerline of toilet to wall or barrier on each side, and a minimum 24" in front of the toilet. CPC 402.5
10. **Ventilation & fan** - Bathrooms containing a bathtub or shower must be mechanically ventilated and ducted to the exterior to control humidity. Window operation is not a permissible method of providing humidity control in a bathroom. Fan must be minimum 50 CFM and Energy Star compliant, separately switched with a variable humidistat. CMC CHAPTER 4, CRC R303.3.1

BENEFITS OF PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

- Ensures construction meets safety codes
- Helps protect your remodeling investment
- Are required by law