

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

SESSION LAW 2009-532  
HOUSE BILL 1409

AN ACT TO EXEMPT CERTAIN ELECTRICAL LIGHTING DEVICES AND FIXTURES  
AND WATER HEATER REPLACEMENT IN RESIDENCES FROM BUILDING  
PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 143-138(b5) as amended by Section 1 of S.L. 2009-245 reads as rewritten:

"(b5) No building permit shall be required under the Code or any local variance thereof approved under subsection (e) for any construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration costing five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or less in any single family residence or farm building unless the work involves: the addition, repair, or replacement of load bearing structures; the addition (excluding replacement of same size and capacity) or change in the design of plumbing; the addition, replacement or change in the design of heating, air conditioning, or electrical wiring, devices, fixtures (excluding repair or replacement of electrical lighting devices and fixtures of the same type), appliances, appliances (excluding replacement of water heaters, provided that the energy use rate or thermal input is not greater than that of the water heater which is being replaced, and there is no change in fuel, energy source, location, capacity, or routing or sizing of venting and piping), or equipment, the use of materials not permitted by the North Carolina Uniform Residential Building Code; or the addition (excluding replacement of like grade of fire resistance) of roofing. The exclusions from building permit requirements set forth in this paragraph for electrical lighting devices and fixtures and water heaters shall apply only to work performed on a one- or two-family dwelling. In addition, exclusions for electrical lighting devices and fixtures and electric water heaters shall apply only to work performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-43 and exclusions for water heaters, generally, to work performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-21."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 153A-357(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) No person may commence or proceed with any of the following without first securing from the inspection department with jurisdiction over the site of the work each permit required by the State Building Code and any other State or local law or local ordinance or regulation applicable to the work:

- (1) The construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement to another site, removal, or demolition of any ~~building;~~ building.
- (2) The installation, extension, or general repair of any ~~plumbing system;~~ system except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit shall not be required for the connection of a water heater that is being replaced, provided that the work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-21, who personally examines the work at completion and ensures that a leak test has been performed on the gas piping, and provided the energy use rate or thermal input is not greater than that of the water heater which is being replaced, there is no change in fuel, energy source, location, capacity, or routing or sizing of venting and piping, and the replacement is installed in accordance with the current edition of the State Building Code.
- (3) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any heating or cooling equipment ~~system;~~ or system.
- (4) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit shall not be required for repair or



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replacement of electrical lighting fixtures or devices, such as receptacles and lighting switches, or for the connection of an existing branch circuit to an electric water heater that is being replaced, provided that all of the following requirements are met:

- a. With respect to electric water heaters, the replacement water heater is placed in the same location and is of the same or less capacity and electrical rating as the original.
- b. With respect to electrical lighting fixtures and devices, the replacement is with a fixture or device having the same voltage and the same or less amperage.
- c. The work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-43.
- d. The repair or replacement installation meets the current edition of the State Building Code, including the State Electrical Code.

~~without first securing from the inspection department with jurisdiction over the site of the work each permit required by the State Building Code and any other State or local law or local ordinance or regulation applicable to the work.~~ A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws and local ordinances and regulations. Nothing in this section shall require a county to review and approve residential building plans submitted to the county pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of the North Carolina State Building Code; provided that the county may review and approve such residential building plans as it deems necessary. No permit may be issued unless the plans and specifications are identified by the name and address of the author thereof; and if the General Statutes of North Carolina require that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a registered architect or registered engineer, no permit may be issued unless the plans and specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a registered architect or of a registered engineer. If a provision of the General Statutes of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed specialty contractor of any kind, no permit for the work may be issued unless the work is to be performed by such a duly licensed contractor. No permit issued under Articles 9 or 9C of G.S. Chapter 143 shall be required for any construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration costing five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or less in any single-family residence or farm building unless the work involves: the addition, repair or replacement of load bearing structures; the addition (excluding replacement of same size and capacity) or change in the design of plumbing; the addition (excluding replacement or change in the design of heating, air conditioning, or electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment; the use of materials not permitted by the North Carolina Uniform Residential Building Code; or the addition (excluding replacement of like grade of fire resistance) of roofing. Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 160A-417(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) No person shall commence or proceed with any of the following without first securing from the inspection department with jurisdiction over the site of the work any and all permits required by the State Building Code and any other State or local laws applicable to the work:

- (1) The construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, movement to another site, removal, or demolition of any building or ~~structure, structure.~~
- (2) The installation, extension, or general repair of any plumbing system, system except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit shall not be required for the connection of a water heater that is being replaced, provided that the work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-21, who personally examines the work at completion and ensures that a leak test has been performed on the gas piping, and provided the energy use rate or thermal input is not greater than that of the water heater which is being replaced, there is no change in fuel, energy source, location, capacity, or routing or sizing of venting and piping, and the replacement is installed in accordance with the current edition of the State Building Code.
- (3) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any heating or cooling equipment ~~system, or system.~~
- (4) The installation, extension, alteration, or general repair of any electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or ~~equipment, equipment~~ except that in any one- or two-family dwelling unit a permit shall not be required for repair or

replacement of electrical lighting fixtures or devices, such as receptacles and lighting switches, or for the connection of an existing branch circuit to an electric water heater that is being replaced, provided that all of the following requirements are met:

- a. With respect to electric water heaters, the replacement water heater is placed in the same location and is of the same or less capacity and electrical rating as the original.
- b. With respect to electrical lighting fixtures and devices, the replacement is with a fixture or device having the same voltage and the same or less amperage.
- c. The work is performed by a person licensed under G.S. 87-43.
- d. The repair or replacement installation meets the current edition of the State Building Code, including the State Electrical Code.

~~without first securing from the inspection department with jurisdiction over the site of the work any and all permits required by the State Building Code and any other State or local laws applicable to the work.~~ A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws. Nothing in this section shall require a city to review and approve residential building plans submitted to the city pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of the North Carolina State Building Code; provided that the city may review and approve such residential building plans as it deems necessary. No permits shall be issued unless the plans and specifications are identified by the name and address of the author thereof, and if the General Statutes of North Carolina require that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a registered architect or registered engineer, no permit shall be issued unless the plans and specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a registered architect or of a registered engineer. When any provision of the General Statutes of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed specialty contractor of any kind, no permit for the work shall be issued unless the work is to be performed by such a duly licensed contractor. No permit issued under Articles 9 or 9C of Chapter 143 shall be required for any construction, installation, repair, replacement, or alteration costing five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or less in any single family residence or farm building unless the work involves: the addition, repair or replacement of load bearing structures; the addition (excluding replacement of same size and capacity) or change in the design of plumbing; the addition, replacement or change in the design of heating, air conditioning, or electrical wiring, devices, appliances, or equipment; the use of materials not permitted by the North Carolina Uniform Residential Building Code; or the addition (excluding replacement of like grade of fire resistance) of roofing. Violation of this section shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor."

**SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2009.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2009.

s/ Marc Basnight  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Joe Hackney  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
Governor

Approved 9:53 a.m. this 28<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2009