



County of Santa Cruz

Department of Community Development and Infrastructure

701 Ocean Street, Fourth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Planning (831) 454-2580 Public Works (831) 454-2160
sccoplanning.com dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

Recovery Permit Center
701 Ocean Street, Basement Floor, Room 20
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
RPC Mainline (831) 454-5323
rpc@santacruzcounty.us

Storm Damage Repair Permits

The following storm damage repair permits can be applied for at the CDI – Planning Division Permit Center. This information on the submittal and process for each type of permit (including live links for referenced material) can be found on our website: www.sccoplanning.com by following the link on our homepage for [Storm Recovery Permitting Information](#) or using the following QR Code:



If you have questions or would like to speak with one of our Planners or Building Counter Technicians about your specific circumstances, please self-schedule an appointment by clicking on the [“Schedule an Appointment”](#) button on our homepage, or send us an email using the contacts at the end of this brochure.

Building Permits

What Requires a Building Permit

According to the California Building Standards Code, most construction, improvements, repairs and alterations to a building or structure, including electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work, require a building permit from the local jurisdiction. A list of work that **does not** require a building permit may be found [here](#).

Examples of typical storm damage repairs that require a building permit:

- Replacement of sheetrock, insulation, subfloor;
- In-kind repairs that do not include structural repairs;
- Electrical wiring repair, replacement of electrical panels;
- HVAC, water heater replacements;
- Structural Repairs.

How to Apply

Depending on the scope of work, many building permit applications can be processed quickly and easily as an “over the counter” permit, issued on the same day they are applied for, while other more complex projects need to be formally submitted and routed to other agencies for review. For reference, all the permits listed above (except structural repairs) are eligible for over-the-counter processing. An overview of the Building Permit process can be found online [here](#), and more detailed direction and required forms may be found [here](#).

Special Requirements for Landslides and Flood Zones

- Structure Affected by Landslide

Building permits for repairs due to impacts from a landslide, erosion, scour or other earth movement may require a Geologic Hazards Assessment or full Geology Report be submitted with the building permit application. Please email the County geologic team at GeologicHazards@santacruzcounty.us to inquire prior to applying.

More information on when a geotechnical or geology report is required, lists of local consultants, and related material may be found online [here](#).

- Structure Located in a FEMA Flood Zone

If your structure is located within a FEMA Flood Zone (also referred to as the “Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)”) other than FEMA Zone X, your permit

application will be evaluated for compliance with FEMA and local requirements for development within the SFHA. This requires additional documents be submitted with your “over-the-counter” or regular building permit application. (Note: ePermit online permitting is not available for over-the-counter permit applications for structures in the SFHA – these are issued by appointment only. Appointments can be self-scheduled online [here](#).)

In order for County constituents to be eligible for FEMA Flood Insurance, the County must track the value of improvements to homes in FEMA Flood Zones. If the cost of improvements and repairs over a 5 year period is more than 50% of the value of the home itself the structure may need to be raised to allow flood waters to pass beneath, along with other flood resilience measures. See below for more information.

- How to Determine if you are in a FEMA Flood Zone

You may already know that you are in a FEMA Flood Zone (SFHA) because your mortgage company requires you to carry flood insurance. Another way to determine if you are in a SFHA is to look up your parcel on this [County FEMA 100-year Flood Hazard Area App](#) (also found through the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department website under “Apps”). Enter your parcel number in the upper left hand corner, and if you are within a FEMA flood zone that is shown as a 100-year flood zone (check the legend on the right hand side of the screen), FEMA submittal requirements for Substantial Improvement apply.

- Contractor’s Estimate or Substantial Improvement Form

Submit a detailed contractor’s estimate or substantial improvement form completed by a contractor to estimate the total cost of improvements or damage repairs. The substantial improvement form can be found [here](#). The value of improvements or damage repairs is tracked by the County, and if the total cost of all improvements for permitted work within the past 5 years exceeds 50% of the assessed or appraised market value of the structure alone (not including land value or other improvements) the structure must be brought into compliance with local and federal regulations for structures in a SFHA, which typically include elevation of and venting beneath the structure.

- Tip: If you have already made a claim to your insurance provider, the claims adjuster usually generates the scope of repairs and cost estimate. County staff will accept this information in place of a contractor's estimate for repairs.
- Tip: You can review the permits issued for your residence in the past 5 years by entering your Assessor's Parcel Number [here](#).
- Tip: You can obtain the assessor's value for your structure by entering your Assessor's Parcel Number or Address [here](#), selecting the "Assessed Value & Taxes" tab – the structure value is the "Improvement" assessed value.
- Tip: If your structure is determined to be substantially damaged or meets FEMA criteria of repetitively damaged and your structure is insured through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with a standard flood insurance policy, you may be eligible for up to \$30,000 in Increased Cost of Compliance Coverage (ICC). The ICC coverage funds help to pay for mitigating the flood risk by such means as elevating or floodproofing (non-residential buildings). To learn more about the ICC claims process, visit www.FEMA.gov/Increased-cost-compliance-coverage.

Grading Permits – Emergency & Regular

Grading permits are required when moving more than 100 cubic yards of earth, creating a cut greater than 5' or fill greater than 2' – a complete list can be found [here](#). Emergency grading approvals may be granted when a sudden, unexpected occurrence involving a clear and present danger demands immediate action to prevent loss of or damage to life, health, or property. The emergency work should be limited to necessary activities to protect the structure or health and safety of its occupants.

Timing: Emergency work must commence within 15 days of emergency permit issuance and must be completed within 30 days of issuance. Time extensions may be granted by the Director.

Within 60 days of the emergency permit issuance, a [grading permit](#) application and fees must be submitted, and within 90 days, the owner must submit all technical reports and project plans. Time extensions can be granted by the Director.

If emergency work is required during nonbusiness hours, property owners can undertake the work and submit for an emergency permit on the next business day.

Application: To apply for an Emergency Grading Approval, send the following information to EnvironmentalPlanningInfo@santacruzcounty.us:

- Contact Information: Name, Address, Assessor's Parcel Number
- Cause: Brief summary of the nature and cause of the emergency
- Description of Work: Scope of work to occur, estimate of cubic yards of earth moved, scaled sketch and/or plans if available
- Engineer of Record for Project: Provide the name and contact information for the civil or geotechnical (soils) engineer overseeing the grading work.
- Contractor: Provide the name and contact information for the licensed contractor performing the work.

[SCCC 16.20](#)

Coastal Development – Emergency Permits

Emergency development undertaken within the Coastal Zone that would typically require a Coastal Development Permit ([SCCC 13.20.050](#)) is eligible for an Emergency Coastal Development Permit (ECDP) ([SCCC 13.20.090](#)). The work must be undertaken due to a sudden unexpected occurrence that demands immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of or damage to life, health, or property, and must be the minimum amount of *temporary* measures necessary to address the emergency.

Examples of storm damage repairs that would require an ECDP:

- Structural repairs for structures located within 50-feet of the top of a coastal bluff;
- Grading of any amount within 300' of the top of a coastal bluff;
- Drainage changes within 50' of the top of a coastal bluff;
- Seawall repairs of any kind (* see note on Coastal Commission processing, below).

Examples of storm damage repairs that would not require an ECDP:

- Non-structural "like for like" replacement of damaged building components, such as windows and doors, without changes to location or configuration.

Timing: Emergency work must commence within 15 days of ECDP issuance and be completed within 90 days after issuance. A time extension can be granted by the Director.

A regular CDP application and fees must be made within 15 days of ECDP issuance. All emergency development is considered temporary and must be removed if it has not been recognized by an issued regular CDP within six months of the ECDP expiration date.

If emergency work is required during nonbusiness hours, property owners can undertake the work and submit for an emergency permit on the next business day.

Application: To apply for an ECDP for repair work to a blufftop residence that was not caused by geotechnical or geologic factors (i.e. bluff instability, drainage) please submit the following materials to Planning.ZoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us. For ECDP applications that involve repairs caused by geotechnical or geologic factors, or involve seawall repairs please submit the following materials to GeologicHazards@santacruzcounty.us.

- Nature of the emergency;
- Cause of emergency;
- Location of the emergency (owner name, address and assessor's parcel number);
- Description of the remedial, protective or preventative work required to deal with the emergency;
- Circumstances that appeared to justify the emergency action taken, including probable consequences of failing to take action.

* Note: For seawall and shoreline protection structure repairs caused by wave action at the base of the bluff, ECDPs will be issued by the Coastal Commission. Please email centralcoastal@coastal.ca.gov. Coastal Commission ECDP applications may be found online at <https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/assets/cdp/emergency-cdp-appl.pdf>.

Contacts

Call Us

(831) 454-2580 to speak to a receptionist 8 AM–12 PM & 1 PM–5 PM

Visit Our Website

<https://www.sccoplanning.com>

Email Us

Building Section -- Planning.BuildingInfo@santacruzcounty.us

Environmental Planning -- EnvironmentalPlanningInfo@santacruzcounty.us

Records Room Inquiries & Appts -- recordsroominquiries@santacruzcounty.us

Zoning Information -- Planning.ZoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us