

PERMITS ARE NEEDED ON ALMOST ALL WATER HEATER REPLACEMENTS

It is time to dispel a very large myth...or what can be referred to as a new urban legend about all replacement water heaters not needing to be permitted. The replacement of most water heater **REQUIRES** a permit, regardless of the "word on the street". Last year, legislation was submitted and approved to allow "**some**" water heaters to be replaced without having to get permits or inspections. What the "word on the street" is not saying, is that most of the replacements will require a permit. **We have worked numerous complaints against licensed contractors who have performed water heater replacements from single family structures to commercial structures where permits were not purchased, in direct violation of this new legislation.** These contractors have been disciplined for listening to the • "word on the street" and not actually confirming the language in the legislation. In addition, there are some inspection departments who are telling licensees that "permits are not required" based again on the "word on the street" and not the actual legislation. This newsletter article is an effort to dispel this myth. In order for a water heater replacement to be installed without a permit, all of the following items have to happen **(if one of the following requirements is missing, then a permit is required):**

- The work is restricted to one- or two-family dwellings only (no buildings with three or more dwelling units and no commercial buildings).
- The work has to be performed by a North Carolina Licensed Plumbing Contractor (or a bona-fide employee of a North Carolina Licensed Plumbing Contractor);
- The licensee is required to personally examine the work at completion
- The licensee is required to ensure that a leak test has been performed on the gas piping;
- The energy use rate or thermal input is not greater than the water heater which is being replaced;
- The replacement is required to be installed in accordance with the current edition of the State Building Code (plumbing section);
- There is no change in fuel;
- There is no change in energy source;
- There is no change in location;
- There is no change in capacity; or
- There is no change in routing or sizing of venting or piping;

Only if all of the above listed items are true on each water heater replacement can a contractor be allowed to refrain from obtaining a permit or inspection for the water heater replacement. If any of the items listed above is missing or not accomplished on a water heater replacement then **A PERMIT IS REQUIRED**. If it is brought to the attention to the Board or someone files a complaint against a licensee for performing a water heater installation without a permit, we will investigate each complaint to make sure all of the requirements listed above have been met. Any jobs where all of the above requirements are not met will result in a verified complaint against the licensee and sanctions will be instituted. If you have any doubt about the need for a permit it is always better to err on the side of caution and secure the permit before commencing the work. You are encouraged to contact the administrative officer in your area. Visit www.nclicensing.org and click on the "Administrative Officers" button to see a list of the administrative officers, the counties in their respective regions, and their contact information.

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