

DO WINDOW REPLACEMENTS REQUIRE A BUILDING PERMIT?



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BUILDING & SAFETY DIVISION

809 Center Street, Room 101, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 | 831-420-5120 | permits@santacruzca.gov

If you are replacing the window with a Retrofit window and aren't making any alterations, then a permit is not required. A permit IS required when:

- **Window framing is altered**, such as for damage repair or to lower the sill to meet egress requirements.
- **Existing flashing is altered**, including when the nailing fin is removed.
- **Exterior wall finish is removed**, for example, when removing stucco to replace a window.
- A permit is required for **each multi-family building**. Please provide the building number and a list of all applicable unit numbers.

REQUIREMENTS FOR WINDOWS ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Whether or not a building permit is required, if a property is listed on the City's Historic Districts, historic review by the Planning Division is required when windows are proposed for replacement.

Replacements of original windows should only be proposed if refurbishment is not possible, and new windows should match the original design as closely as possible. For Santa Cruz's Historic Districts; [Historic Districts | City of Santa Cruz](#)

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WINDOW REPLACEMENTS

Whether or not a building permit is required, the replacement window must conform to current construction standards, including:

Window design. Even if the existing framing is not altered, the design of the replacement window must comply with current requirements for new construction as much as possible. For example, when replacing a window that has become a noncomplying single-hung style, a new style must be chosen that is in compliance.

Window size. The replacement window must meet size regulations that apply to new construction, including the egress size required for emergency exit. If installed in an existing frame, then the replacement window must meet the dimension standards as much as possible. Current sizing regulations are summarized below:

- **All habitable rooms** - Must have exterior windows with an area that totals a minimum of 4% of the floor area for ventilation and a minimum of 8% of the floor area of the room for light.
- **All sleeping rooms and basements** - Must meet these specifications:
 - Minimum 5.7 square feet opening*
 - Minimum height of 24 inches
 - Minimum width of 20 inches
 - Maximum height to bottom of clear opening of 44 inches

*To meet the required minimum 5.7 square-foot opening, either the width, height or both must exceed the minimum dimensions shown. If the bottom of a clear opening is less than 44 inches above outdoor adjacent grade, then a minimum 5 square feet is acceptable.



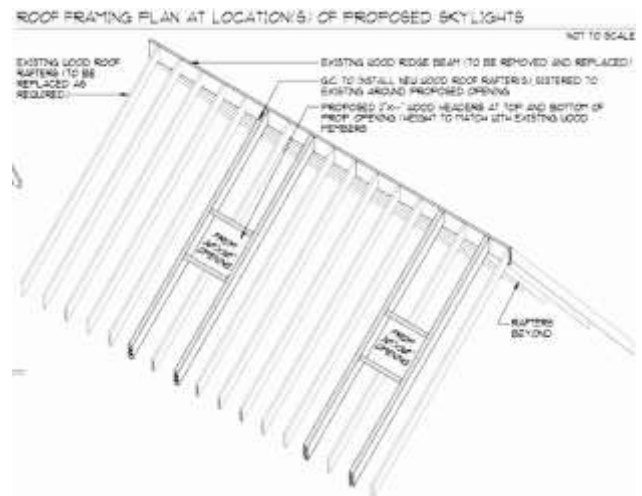
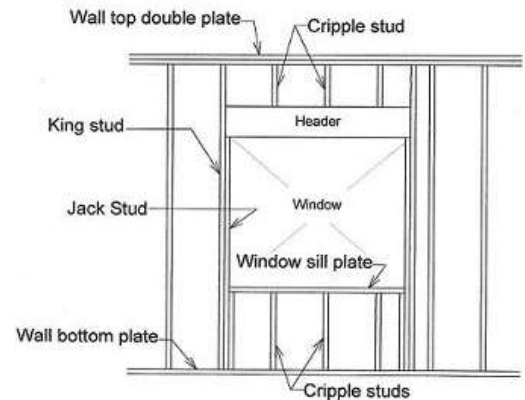
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WHAT & HOW TO SUBMIT

1. Completed Permit Application.
2. Windows/ Patio Doors Schedule.
3. Site Plan with the Following:
 - Lot dimensions, the shape of the building, and distances to the property line
 - Existing (E) and proposed new (N) window sizes (New windows will require a framing detail)
 - The type of room in which the window is located, e.g., bedroom
4. A Skylight will Require a Roof Framing Plan and should include:
 - Show the number, size, and exact placement of all skylights.
 - Provide dimensions to roof edges, ridges, and other nearby features.
 - Cross-section showing skylight, roof framing, and curb or frame height above the roof surface.
 - Detail for skylight installation, including flashing and weatherproofing.
 - Manufacturer's cut sheet showing skylight type, dimensions, and weights.
 - ICC Evaluation Report or certification that the skylight is listed/labeled for residential use per CBC
 - If the skylight is operable and intended to provide emergency egress, show clear opening dimensions and sill height.
 - Identify any skylights located above stairways, bathrooms, or areas defined as hazardous ("hazard locations")—these must be safety glazed as per code.
 - Indicate compliance with wildfire resistance standards if the property is within a designated wildfire hazard area.
 - Projects altering structural framing may require structural calculations, especially for trusses and rafter.



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DEFINITIONS

Window Frame - Consists of the header, king stud, cripple stud, sill, and associated supports.	Window Flashing - The thin material installed around a window frame to prevent moisture or wind infiltration between the window where it meets the exterior wall of a house.	Retrofit Window - A retrofit window is one that is installed within the existing opening without altering the surrounding walls or the existing flashing.	Safety Glass- New glazing in existing openings must be safety glass if the opening is in a hazardous location as defined in current standards for new construction. "Glazing" refers to glass or other transparent or translucent material used in windows, doors, panels, or similar assemblies, regardless of whether it is tempered, laminated, or another type of safety glass.
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Instructions to Apply a Building Permit to Replace Existing/ Add New Windows/ Skylights and/or Patio Doors

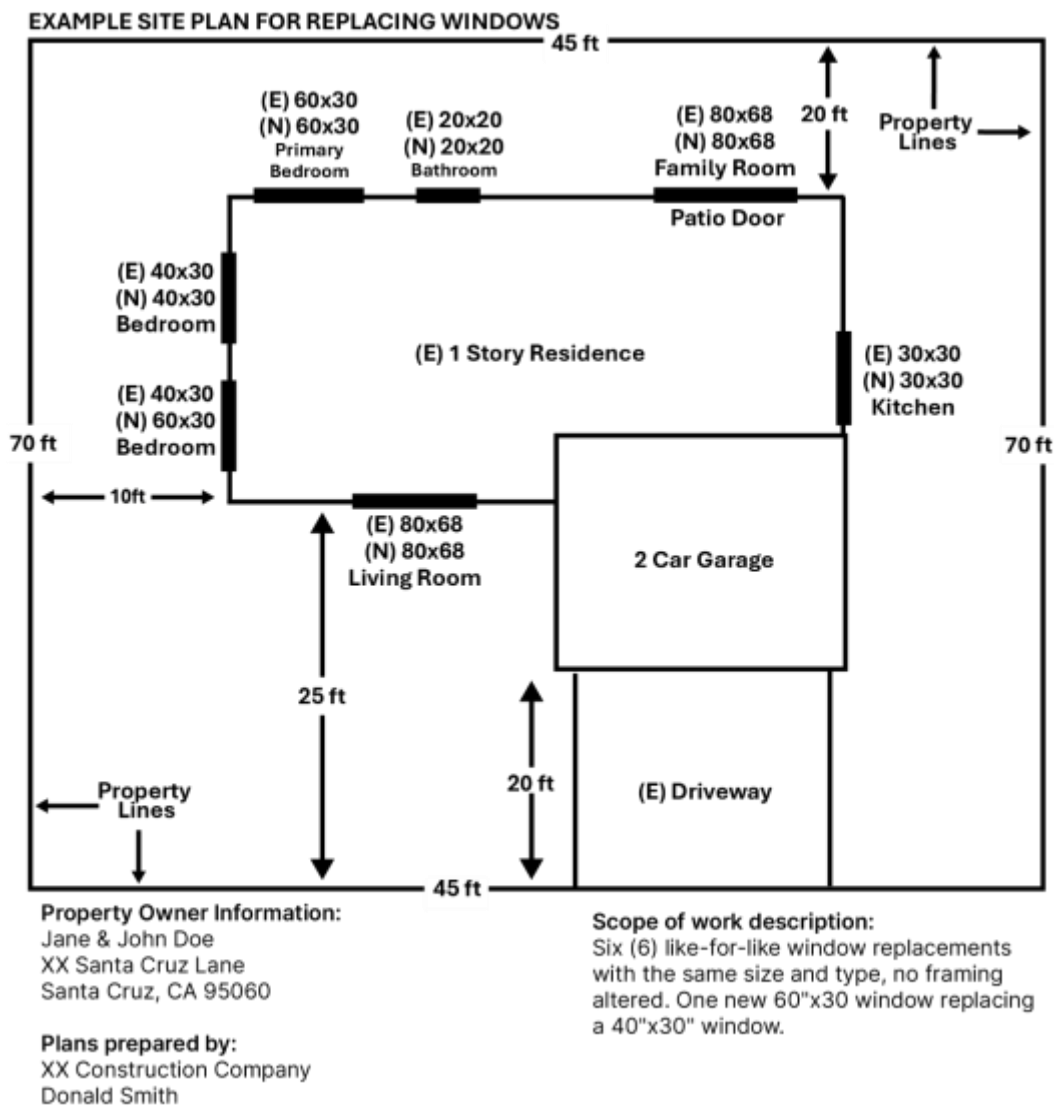
1. Completed Building Permit Application Form.
2. Completed Owner-Builder's Acknowledgment Form is required if the application is submitted by Owner-Builder.
3. A completed attached Windows/Patio Doors Schedule.
1. Use one or more of the same forms if (11) or more windows/patio doors are being replaced.
4. Existing and proposed Floor plan with location of the windows and patio doors including the size and type of the windows.
5. Photographs of the windows/patio doors from the exterior will not be accepted.
6. Copy of Manufacturer's Specification of the windows/ skylights/ patio doors that are being installed.
7. For Skylights, provide a roof frame plan showing the number, size, and exact placement of all skylights.
2. and cross-section showing skylight, roof framing, and curb or frame height above the roof surface.
8. Stamped, signed framing structural calculations.

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Example of window schedule:

	USE OF ROOM	OPENING TYPE (SLIDER, HUNG, CASEMENT, FIXED, BAY WINDOW, PATIO DOOR, ETC.)		MATERIAL AND COLOR		GRIDS	ROUGH FRAME SIZE (W x H)		NET CLEAR NEW OPENING SIZE (W x H)
		EXISTING	NEW	EXISTING	NEW		EXISTING	NEW	
1	BEDROOM #1	SILIDER	SLIDER	ALUMINUM/BLACK	VINYL/BLACK 3	NO	6' 0" x 4' 0"	6' 0" x 4' 0"	33" X 42"

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City of Santa Cruz Windows/ Skylight/ Patio Door Schedule Information Permit # B _____

Property Address: _____

(Mandatory- Print clearly and fill in all as required. Use one or more of this form if you have 11 or more windows/patio doors.)

	Use of Room	Opening Type: (Slider, Hung, Casement, Fixed, Bay Window, Patio Door, Etc.)		Material & Color		Grids (Yes / No)	Rough Frame Size (W x H)		Net Clear New Opening Size (W x H)
		Existing	New	Existing	New		Existing	New	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									

Applicant's or Property Owner's Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____