

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Permit Required for Closed Crawl Space**

**Code:** 2009 Administrative Code and Policies  
**Section:** 106.1

**Date:** July 1, 2009

**Question:**

Are permits required for the conversion of a conventional crawl space with wall ventilation openings to a closed crawl space per Section R904 of the Residential Code?

**Answer:**

Yes. Section 106.1 states that a current permit is required for all work described in the technical codes unless specifically exempted by the North Carolina Statutes or the technical codes.

General Statutes 153A-357 and 160A-417 address permits in more detail and list some exceptions to the requirement for permits. GS 153A-357 and 160A-417 state that no permit is required if the work is in a single family dwelling and the cost of the work is \$5,000 or less. GS 153A-357 and 160A-417 then list exceptions to the exceptions which state that if the design of the electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems are changed, a permit is required. One of the requirements of a closed crawl space is that moisture levels in the crawl space be controlled.

Moisture control may be provided by one of the following:

- a permanently installed dehumidifier with a condensate pump or drain and an electrical outlet ducting supply air from the dwelling air conditioning system
- blowing house air to the crawl space with a fan
- installing an exhaust fan
- designing the crawl space as a heated and cooled conditioned space.

All of the above measures involve some level of addition or change in the design of the electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems.

Summarizing, a permit is required when either of two conditions is met:

- when the cost of the work is more than \$5,000
- when the work involves addition or change in the design of the electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems.

Since the work described in Section R904 of the Residential Code will involve addition or change in the design of the electrical, mechanical, or plumbing systems, a permit is required to convert a conventional crawl space to a closed crawl space.