

## More commonly asked questions...

**“Is a permit required to put a corrugated plastic, metal, rubber, or shingle roof on my pergola?”**

Yes. If a roof is added to a pergola it is no longer considered a pergola, but a gazebo. The structure will be required to support snow loads, wind loads, and properly shed water from roof and structure.

**“Is a permit required if I install electric in my pergola or gazebo?”**

Yes, an electrical permit is required to install, alter, repair, replace, or relocate any electrical material, appliances, or equipment.

**“Why is a permit required?”**

The purpose of the code is to establish minimum requirements to safeguard the public safety, health, and general welfare through affordability, structural strength, means of egress facilities, stability, sanitation, light and ventilation, energy conservation, and the safety to life and property from fire and other hazards attributed to the build environment.

**“What if my HOA already approved it?”**

The Town of Apex requires all permitting standards outlined here and contained in the NC Residential Building Codes to be followed independently of HOA approval. It is recommended to check with your HOA regarding its pergola and gazebo regulations prior to applying for Town of Apex permits.

Links to the North Carolina Residential Code can be found on the Building Inspections webpage at:

[www.apexnc.org](http://www.apexnc.org).

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the Building Inspections Permit Desk at:

(919) 249-3418.

### Town of Apex Building Inspections & Permitting

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## Gazebos and Pergolas



### Information and Resource Guide



# Pergola basics

## What is a pergola?

A pergola is an arbor formed of horizontal trelliswork supported on columns or posts, over which vines or other plants are trained.

Most importantly, a pergola **does not** have a roof.

## When does a pergola require a permit?

A **freestanding** pergola is not listed as an accessory structure under section R101.2.2 of the North Carolina Residential Code so long as it is not attached to the house, and therefore **does not** require a permit.

However, if any part of the pergola is **supported by the house**, it is considered an addition and will require a permit.

## What steps do I need to complete before building a pergola?

No plan review, fees, applications, or permits are needed to build a freestanding pergola.

# Guide to gazebos

## What is a gazebo?

A gazebo is a **roofed** and most often **freestanding** structure that offers an open view of the surrounding area, typically used for relaxation or entertainment.

## When does a gazebo require a permit?

Gazebos are listed as an accessory structure under section R101.2.2 of the North Carolina Residential Code and require a permit.

Exception: the Town of Apex will not require a permit for portable, manufactured, lightweight gazebos not exceeding 400 square feet or 12 feet mean roof height.

## What steps do I need to complete before building a gazebo?

- Plan Review (submit plan and plot plan)
- Permit application
- Checklist
- Payment of fees

# A visual guide...

## Examples of pergolas:



## Examples of gazebos:



## Examples of when a permit is required:



### Permit not required:

Freestanding pergola without roof.



### Permit required:

Pergola is attached to the house, making this an addition.



### Permit required:

Roofing material is installed, making this a gazebo.



### Permit required:

A building permit is not required, but due to the installation of fans and/or outlets, an electrical permit **is** required.

# Getting up to date

If your gazebo was built without a permit, or a roof has already been added to your pergola, it's important to note that there are still options for bringing the structure up to code.



## What to do when you already have an unpermitted gazebo, or a pergola with a solid roof:

- Obtain a building permit if the gazebo or roofed pergola was built without a permit.

### Or

- Remove any solid roofing material on the pergola and **do not** replace it.

## And don't forget an electrical permit!

In either case, remember to obtain an electrical permit for any electrical work that was completed without a permit.