

**NC Department of Insurance  
Office of the State Fire Marshal - Engineering Division  
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**Pier, Dock, Bulkhead, and Waterway Structure Permit Requirements**

**Code:** 2012 Residential Code  
**Section:** R101.2, R324

**Date:** August 7, 2013  
**Rev.:** Feb. 15, 2018

**Code:** 2012 Administrative Code and Policies  
**Section:** 106.1

**Question:**

Is a permit required for residential piers, docks, bulkheads, and waterway structures?

**Answer:**

Yes. Section R324.1 has requirement limitations for these structures. A permit is required to verify the section's exception limitations have not been exceeded. Also, a plan shall be submitted for approval that the exceptions have been met. This plan is not required to be by a design professional. These types of structures complying with the exceptions of R324.1 are not required to meet the provisions of this code or chapter 36 of the NC Building Code.

If these types of structures exceed the limitations in the exception of R324.1 they would also need to be permitted and constructed in accordance with Chapter 36 of the NC Building Code.

**Question:**

Is a permit required for *existing* residential piers, docks, bulkheads, and waterway structures that are repaired or altered?

**Answer:**

Yes. Any existing pier or dock that meets the limitations in the exception in Section R324.1 is not required to meet the provisions of Chapter 36 of the NC Building Code. A permit is required and a plan shall be submitted for approval that the exceptions have been met. This plan is not required to be by a design professional.

Existing piers and docks that exceed the limitations in Section R324 are required to comply with Chapter 36 of the NC Building Code for the portion being repaired or altered. The work may require a sealed plan for the project based on the scope of work. The extent of the repair or alteration to an existing dock or pier will govern the need to require sealed plans for the structure. In general, minor repairs that do not impact the existing pier or dock structure would not require plans sealed by a registered design professional. Extensive repairs or alterations will likely require sealed plans. Ultimately, the local code official is responsible for whether or not an existing pier can be safely repaired or altered without plans that are sealed by a registered design professional as permitted by Section 106.2.2 of the NC Administrative Code and Policies.

**Keywords:**

Finger piers, crosswalks, boat slip, pile spacing, boatlift.