



CITY OF LINCOLN
Community Development Department
600 Sixth Street
Lincoln, CA 95648
(916) 434-2470 - office
Email: CDDPermitCenter@lincolnca.gov

THINKING OF CUTTING YOUR CEILING? CONSULT YOUR BUILDING DEPARTMENT FIRST!

Before you cut a hole in the garage ceiling to gain access to the attic area under the roof for storage or before you cut through your hall ceiling to add a whole house fan, please read the following.

Statistics show that most house fires start in the garage (kitchen and bedroom run second and third) and spread to the rest of the house. Certain Building Codes were instituted because of this, such as gas water heaters in the garage must be elevated 18" (to prevent the pilot light from igniting paint and fuel fumes that are heavier than air but very combustible). Older home construction required the garage be separated from the living area by a fire wall.

When a homeowner looking for more storage space cuts through the garage ceiling and installs an "attic" access panel, they compromise the fire wall. They have in effect nullified the protection of the Sheetrock and a fire starting in the garage can quickly spread to the rest of the house.

When a homeowner cuts some of the bottom chords of the ceiling trusses to make room for the access panel or a whole house fan they weaken the truss and compromise the roof system which can potentially cause a catastrophic structural failure. Secondly, you invalidate the warranty of the truss which can affect your ability to make a claim should something happen.

Because of the way trusses are constructed, on a tension and compression design, boxing in the opening you cut will not help and in some cases be more detrimental.

When you throw a piece of plywood on the trusses and use it for storage, you are using the trusses in way they were not designed for. Trusses generally are designed for a 20 lb live load. That means they are designed to withstand a worker walking across the trusses as they install them. They are not designed for a dead load--that is for weight remaining on them. The extra weight will weaken the truss, and possibly cause noticeable sags. Will they come down? It would depend on how much weight was added to them.

When you are planning a project, we encourage you to give the Lincoln Building Department a call first to see if what you are planning will be feasible and to obtain any necessary permits.