

A Basic Guide to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code

Building Code Official

You must contact the designated Building Code Official for the opt-in municipality in which you wish to build, add-onto, remodel, or repair any residential structure, to determine what local amendments to the UCC, if any that municipality has imposed.

You are required to comply with local amendments to the UCC as well as the state law and the adopted residential code.

To contact the Building Code Official, please call your township, borough, or city government office during normal business hours.

For an opt-in municipality, the Building Code Official can also provide you with:

- Information on whether the type of work you wish to perform requires a permit
- Requirements for plans and construction documents required for the type of work you wish to perform
- Permit Fee Schedules
- Inspection requirements
- Occupancy Permit Requirements

WORDS OF CAUTION...

Please keep in mind that doing work regulated by the UCC without a permit will result in an enforcement action being taken against you by the municipality, and upon conviction, you may be subject to fines and penalties up to and including \$1,000 per day of each.

Also, occupying any structure without a Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Building Code Official is a serious violation and will also result in enforcement action. Please do not occupy or begin using any structure without a Certificate of Occupancy!

If you fail to obtain permits, inspections and certificates of occupancy, it is very likely that you will have serious difficulties when you eventually try to sell your house or property, as all structures built since April 9, 2004 must have a legal certificate of occupancy.

A Zoning Permit is required for any work within the Municipality regardless of whether a permit is needed for the UCC. Contact your local Zoning Officer for more information.

RESIDENTIAL INFORMATION ONLY

The guidelines in this brochure only apply to single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings (duplexes, twins, houses with separate dwelling units on first floor and second floor), townhouses, and structures that are considered “accessory” to these types of residential structures.

REQUIRED RESIDENTIAL PERMITS (Not a Complete List – Contact your Zoning Officer)

By state law you will need a permit, inspections, and a certificate of occupancy for:

- Any new house (one or two-family dwelling)
 - Any addition to an existing house
 - Constructing one or more new stories on top of an existing house
 - Increasing the perimeter of the existing house
- Installing a new manufactured home (HUD Code)
- Installing a new modular home
- Any garage or carport that is attached to the house
- Any garage, carport, shed or greenhouse that is not attached to a single-family dwelling and is 1,000 square feet or larger (measuring the perimeter). Check with the local municipality as size of structure varies.
- Enclosing a porch or patio
- Installing/ building a sunroom or “three-seasons” room
- Installing any deck that is more than 30” above ground level at any point around the perimeter of the deck
- Installing an indoor or outdoor hot tub or spa
- Constructing an in-ground swimming pool (inside or outside)
- Installing any swimming pool (including inflatable type) that has a water depth of 24” or more
- Installing any fence high than 6’
- Structural alterations to an existing dwelling unit (Building Code Official will determine if the work you intend to perform involves structural alterations)
- Changes to an existing means of egress (exit door, stairs, handrails, guard systems, ramps)
- Any portion of a dwelling or residential accessory structure that will be used for commercial purposes (open to employees or the public). Examples include:
 - Professional offices
 - Business offices
 - Notaries
 - Beauty shops, nail salons, barber shops
 - Car or Equipment repair

Permits must be applied for and issued before any work may begin. All work performed on residential buildings and their accessory structures must comply with the most current edition of the **International Residential Code**, published by the International Code Council. This code is re-published every three years with changes and additions. We are currently utilizing the 2009 International Residential Code in Pennsylvania and will continue to do so until the end of 2012.

BUILDING PERMIT AND INSPECTION FEES

The UCC does not establish fees for permit applications and inspections. All fees regarding building permits and inspections are adopted by the elected officials in each municipality and must be publicly available. Ask your Building Code Official or municipality secretary/ manager for a copy of the fee schedule that has been adopted by resolution.

ZONING, LAND USE, AND OTHER MUNICIPAL APPROVALS

Keep in mind that local zoning and land use ordinances (if applicable) may restrict or prohibit structures that are allowed by the UCC. Your Building Code Official can help you determine whether your proposed work requires zoning or other municipal approvals.

Zoning approval and other municipal approvals or permits (when required) must be obtained and presented to the Building Code Official before a building or building-related permit under the UCC may be issued.