



CODE ENFORCEMENT AGENCY
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MUNICIPAL HELPFUL GUIDLEINE SHEET

This sheet is to help explain to municipal building and administrative departments the proper protocol and procedure the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (PA UCC) requires for the Building Code Official to perform the tasks required in a legal manner for your community.

Definitions:

- 1) PA UCC – Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code- This is the “building code” established in 2004 by Act 45. It established the basis for a uniformed language for building departments to follow.
- 2) BCO- Building Code Official – This is certified position of the Pa UCC. Most refer to the BCO as code enforcement which in some communities may be one in the same position. However, the BCO oversees the building department and endorses all permits under the UCC.
- 3) FCO- Fire Code Official provides interpretations and enforcement of the International Fire Code. (Maintenance Code)
- 4) ICC- International Code Council – The PA UCC follows the codes as described in the various ICC volumes:
IBC- International Building Code (Commercial Code), IRC- International Residential Code- (reserved for single family dwellings and duplex), ANSI- Accessibility National Standard (most times referred to as ADA), IPMC – International Property Maintenance Code – (is designed for a uniformed local property maintenance code), IFC – International Fire Code (specifically designed for fire code maintenance and enforcement), IPC – International Plumbing Code (covers all the plumbing code), IMC – International Mechanical Code (covers all the mechanical code), NEC- National Electric Code (covers all the commercial electric code), IECC - International Energy Conservation Code (covers the energy standards and code), IPSC – International Pool and Spa Code (covers all pools and spas), IEBC- International Existing Building Code (covers commercial code for all existing buildings).
- 5) Plans and Plan Review- These are referred to by building plans such as architectural or engineered designed drawings, details or guidelines. The PA UCC requires all commercial applications be accompanied with a designed set of plans sealed by a Pennsylvania Architect or Engineer. The plans review is a process whereby a certified plans examiner reviews the designs for minimum code compliance.
- 6) Permits – The legal intent to grant permission for a construction, alteration or addition project to proceed forward by the local authority having jurisdiction (AHJ).
- 7) Inspection- The legal observance of work being performed in accordance with a schedule, procedure and design authorized by an authority having jurisdiction.

Permits

There are many different permits described throughout all the code volumes. Often separate permits which may be required for a single project. The project is first reviewed by the BCO and assigned to the plan's examiner for minimum code compliance. Once reviewed and approved by the plan's examiner, the submitted plans are permitted with an "official" placard signed by the building code official. Based upon the design submitted, the plans examiner will also assign the required inspections for final.

Inspections

There are many different and required inspections during a permit process. Many different code volumes may be reviewed and described in a single set of plans submitted in a permit application. The three most described are as follows:

- 1) Pre-production Inspections – may include lot development and plans examination
- 2) During -production – all the required inspections of the design submitted.
- 3) Post- production – involves maintenance inspections after occupancy, such as: IPMC and IFC inspections to ensure continuous safety compliance of occupants and the public are at a minimum basis.

Occupancy

This refers to the legal certificate granted to an occupant by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). The Certificate of Occupancy is signed by the BCO on file with the Commonwealth. Occupancy does not end at final inspection. The Occupancy Certificate may be revoked by the BCO if unsafe conditions, illegal, improper use or lack of proper and functioning utilities are present in an occupied condition.

Application

The legal form required by the BCO to open a new matter as requested by the owner or owner's agent of a property or space. The Commonwealth UCC describes certain information that must be captured on an application. A permit cannot be issued without a proper application being filed with the municipality.

Step by Step Process- Everything begins and Ends at the Municipality.

- 1) An application is requested by the owner or owner's agent of the described property or space. The requestor fills out and signs the application.
- 2) A set of plans or descriptions of what is being requested in the application is attached to the signed application and submitted to the local building department.
- 3) The application is legally accepted by the local building department and assigned to the Building Code Official for review and processing.
- 4) The BCO reviews the submitted application and information and assigns the materials to the plan's examiner to review for minimum code compliance.
- 5) Once "stamped" by the plans examiner as accepted, the plans or descriptions are submitted for permitting.
- 6) The actual placard and administrative supportive materials are collated into a permit package and submitted to the BCO for final review.
- 7) The BCO reviews all proper steps and protocols have been legally processed and signs the placard for permit.
- 8) The plans or descriptions, placard and all information, notes and details received are returned to the municipality for building department processing and procurement of permit.
- 9) Procurement of permit by the applicant or agent is achieved at the local municipal offices. NOTE: A permit is not active by law until procured by the AHJ.
- 10) Additional permits may not have been properly procured.
- 11) The permit holder is given a list of inspections required as per the design / descriptions submitted in the application. All inspections must be requested by the permit holder or contractor assigned and must be final by the BCO prior to closing out the permit.
- 12) A final inspection or certificate of occupancy is issued and signed by the BCO. Note: not all permits may require a certificate of

What's the Hold UP??

In some cases, getting from application to final or certificate is not achieved as quick as the applicant's interests are expecting. Here are a few examples of bottlenecks that may occur:

- 1) Application submitted is incomplete, illegible or not signed by the applicant.
- 2) Application is absent of proper supportive documents, designs or descriptions.
- 3) Plans Examination is requiring additional information, details or documents for plans approval.
- 4) Applicant changes information, details or descriptions in the original submission.
- 5) Contractor or Applicant failed to properly request inspections assigned.
- 6) Applicant or Contractor changes approved designs in the field during construction.
- 7) A design professional discharges the sealed plans during construction.
- 8) Applicant or Contractor may be asked for additional details or documents during construction for support to the permit and have not submitted the required.
- 9) Applicant or Contractor has not completed required final inspections.

**** In all such scenarios or suggestions, the BCO is assigned to help the permit along. Contact the BCO for review or updates of information when necessary.**

Notable Details of the Building Department:

- 1) The Application is a legal document and must be legible, completed properly and signed prior to acceptance.
- 2) Commercial Applications submitted require designed plans sealed by a Pennsylvania Architect or Engineer.
- 3) Residential plans (do not require sealed plans) **Only when the BCO requires**
- 4) Any new construction or addition to a structure primary structure requires a review for permitting by the BCO.
- 5) Accessory structures less than <1000 square feet are exempted from UCC permit. (NOT Zoning).
- 6) Submitted applications must be accepted or rejected by the BCO within the following timeline:
 - Residential Applications – 15-Business Days
 - Commercial Applications – 30 Business Days

NOTE: Any failure of plans submitted to the BCO are subject to progress of the applicant and not within the review guidelines. Failed plans over 30-days unclaimed or unresponsive are returned to the local jurisdiction as denied applications.

- 7) PA UCC requires proof of workman's compensation for all contractors or applicants. In the event the applicant or contractor is a sole proprietor or individual, a "waiver" to workman's compensation must be signed and notarized. This is required prior to permit submission.
- 8) All inspections assigned by the BCO must be fulfilled before any final inspection or occupancy approvals. Uninspected or skipped inspections are solely the discretion of the local BCO to review and further professional inspection may be required by the BCO.
- 9) Commercial applications, plans, details, designs and inspections are NOT subject to PA Right to Know and should never be shared without the expressed permission of the BCO.
- 10) Every municipality is AUDITED by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (PA L&I) every 5 years for all commercial permits reviewed and issued. The BCO and license of the BCO is audited for compliance.

PA UCC is different than local Zoning, Land Development, Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement. Although all departments work very close in hand. The legal process and descriptions may not overlap with local ordinances.

All fees associated with UCC permits, inspections and services are approved by the local municipality by ordinance and a fee adoption.

All UCC related information is always shared with the municipality. Some materials are not permitted to be shared with the public.

Commercial Electrical Permits are always separate from UCC permits. Residential Electrical is always included in the UCC permit.

All CEA inspectors wear uniforms, identification tags and use company vehicles while performing on behalf of the municipality. No unidentified employees ever inspect outside those guidelines.

All inspections and services (outside emergencies) are only performed during normal business hours of Monday thru Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm.