

# Do I Need a Building Permit?

Although most construction projects require a building permit, the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (PA UCC) under Sections 403.1, 403.42, and 403.62 provide a number of specific exemptions.

Keep in mind: many provisions of the PA UCC are amendable by the local jurisdiction. It is important to check with the Township prior to the start of construction to confirm that the work is exempt. For example; the PA UCC exempts fully-detached residential accessory buildings (garage or shed) less than 1000 square feet from needing a permit, but many jurisdictions have amended this provision to reduce the exemption to two-hundred (200) square feet.

## *THE FOLLOWING WORK **DOES NOT** REQUIRE A BUILDING PERMIT:*

1. Fully detached accessory buildings to single-family dwellings less than 1,000 square feet. **Don't forget to check with the jurisdiction for amendments.**
2. Agricultural Buildings. Agricultural buildings are defined under Section 7210.103 of the PA UCC as; "A structure utilized to store farm implements, hay, feed, grain or other agricultural or horticultural products or to house poultry, livestock or other farm animals, a milk house and a structure used to grow mushrooms. The term includes a carriage house owned and used by members of a recognized religious sect for the purposes of housing horses and storing buggies. The term shall not include habitable space or spaces in which agricultural products are processed, treated or packaged and shall not be construed to mean a place of occupancy by the general public." **Horse barns for private use are considered agricultural, horse barns for commercial stables and equestrian training facilities are not considered agricultural.**
3. Manufactured and industrialized housing (mobile homes and modular homes). The UCC only exempts the work done at the factory. All work performed on-site must be inspected and be code compliant. Therefore, although the housing itself does not need a permit, installation of the housing unit does.
4. Installation of tubing, piping, propane gas burning appliances, equipment or fixtures related to liquefied petroleum gas under the Propane and Liquefied Petroleum Gas Act (35 P. S. §§ 1329.1-1329.19).
5. Alterations to residential buildings which do not make structural changes or changes to *means of egress*. Under this subsection, a structural change does not include a minor framing change needed to replace existing windows or doors.
6. Ordinary repairs to residential buildings. **Roof replacement is not an *ordinary* repair. A new roof requires a permit.**
7. Installation of aluminum or vinyl siding onto an existing residential or an existing commercial building.
8. A recreational cabin if the following conditions are met:
  - The cabin is equipped with at least one smoke detector, one fire extinguisher and one carbon monoxide detector in both the kitchen and sleeping quarters.
  - The owner of the cabin files one of the following with the municipality:
    - L&I Department form UCC-13 attesting to the fact that the building meets the definition of a recreational cabin.

· A valid proof of insurance for the recreational cabin, written and issued by an insurer authorized to do business in this Commonwealth, stating that the structure meets the definition of a "recreational cabin."

9. Structures which are:

- a. Erected for the purpose of participation in a fair, flea market, arts and crafts festival or other public celebration.
- b. Less than 1,600 square feet in size.
- c. Erected for a period of less than 30 days.
- d. Not a swimming pool, spa or hot tub.

10. Fences that are not over 6 feet in height.

11. Retaining walls, which are not over 4 feet in height measured from the lowest level of grade to the top of the wall, unless it is supporting a surcharge.

12. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finishing work.

13. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a Group R-3 occupancy which are less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,000 gallons, and are installed entirely above ground.

14. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to one- or two-family dwellings.

15. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall which do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall and do not require additional support of group R-3 as applicable in the "International Building Code," and Group U occupancies.

16. Window replacement without structural change.

17. Maintenance of, and simple repairs to; electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems. **If you intend to alter, or add to any of these systems, or you are replacing an entire system, contact the code office.**

18. Installation of an uncovered deck where the floor of the deck is no more than 30 inches above grade, provided construction of the deck does not alter the means of egress.