

PERMIT AND INSPECTION PROCESS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

§ 403.61. Residential buildings.

This subchapter and §§ 403.62-403.66 apply to municipalities electing to enforce the Uniform Construction Code under § 403.102 (relating to municipalities electing to enforce the Uniform Construction Code) and third-party agencies.

§ 403.62. Permit requirements and exemptions.

(a) An owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the occupancy of a residential building or erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace an electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system regulated by the Uniform Construction Code shall first apply to the building code official and obtain the required permit under § 403.62a (relating to permit application).

(b) An emergency repair or replacement of equipment may be made without first applying for a permit if a permit application is submitted to the building code official within 3 business days of the repair or replacement.

(c) A permit is not required for the exceptions listed in § 403.1(b) (relating to scope) and the following, if the work does not violate a law or ordinance:

(1) Fences that are no more than 6 feet high.

(2) Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the lowest level of grade to the top of the wall unless the wall supports a surcharge.

(3) Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons and the ratio of height to diameter or width does not exceed 2 to 1.

(4) Sidewalks and driveways that are 30 inches or less above adjacent grade and not placed over a basement or story below it.

(5) Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.

(6) Swings and other playground equipment accessory to a one- or two-family dwelling.

(7) 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.

(8) Installation of an uncovered deck where the floor of the deck is no more than 30 inches above grade.

(9) Installation or rearrangement of communications wiring.

(d) An ordinary repair does not require a permit. **The following are not ordinary repairs:**

(1) Cutting away a load-bearing wall, partition or portion of a wall.

(2) The removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support.

(3) The removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements.

(4) The addition to, or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, sewer, drainage, drain leader, gas, soil, waste, vent or similar piping, electric wiring or mechanical.

(e) A permit is not required for the installation, alteration or repair of generation, transmission, distribution, metering or other related equipment under the ownership and control of public service agencies.

§ 403.62a. Permit application.

(a) Applications for a permit required under § 403.62 (relating to permit requirements and exemptions) shall be submitted to the building code official in accordance with this section.

(b) A permit applicant shall submit an application to the building code official and attach construction documents with plans and specifications and all other permits or approvals related to the construction required by §403.102(n) (relating to municipalities electing to enforce the Uniform Construction Code).

(c) A building code official **may** waive the submission of construction documents if the nature of the construction does not require the review of the construction documents to determine compliance with the Uniform Construction Code.

(d) A permit applicant for a building or structure located in a flood hazard area under the National Flood Insurance Program shall submit the following information with the construction documents:

(1) Delineation of flood hazard areas, floodway boundaries and flood zones and the design flood elevation, as appropriate.

(2) The elevation of the proposed lowest floor including basement and the height of the proposed lowest floor including basement above the highest adjacent grade is to be included in the documents if the building or structure is located in areas of shallow flooding (Zone AO).

(3) Design flood elevations contained on the municipality's Flood Insurance Rate Map produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The building code official and the applicant shall obtain and reasonably utilize design flood elevation and floodway data available from other sources if this information is not contained on the municipality's Flood Insurance Rate Map.

(e) The application must contain a site plan showing the size and location of the new construction and existing structures on the site and the structure's distance from lot lines. If the construction involves demolition, the site plan must indicate construction that is to be demolished and the size and location of existing structures and construction that will remain on the site or plot. A building code official may waive or modify the site plan requirement when the permit application is for an alteration or a repair or if the waiver is warranted for other reasons.

§ 403.63. Grant, denial and effect of permits.

(a) A building code official shall grant or deny a permit application, in whole or in part, within 15 business days of the filing date or the application is deemed approved. If the drawings were prepared by a design professional who is licensed or registered under the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth and the application contains a certification by the licensed or registered design professional that the plans meet the applicable standards of the Uniform Construction Code and ordinance as appropriate, a building code official shall grant or deny a permit application, in whole or in part, within 5 business days of the filing date or the application is deemed approved. Reasons for denial must be in writing, identifying the elements of the application which are not in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Uniform Construction Code and ordinance as appropriate and providing a citation to the relevant provisions of the Uniform Construction Code and ordinance as appropriate, and sent to the permit applicant. The building code official and the applicant may agree in writing to extend the deadline by a specific number of days.

(b) A building code official shall examine the construction documents and shall determine whether the construction indicated and described is in accordance with the Uniform Construction Code and other pertinent laws or ordinances as part of the application process.

(c) A building code official shall stamp or place a notation on each page of the set of reviewed construction documents that the documents were reviewed and approved for Uniform Construction Code compliance before the permit is issued. The building code official shall clearly mark any required non design changes on the construction documents. The building code official shall return a set of the construction documents with this notation and any required changes to the applicant. The applicant shall keep a copy of the construction documents at the work site open to inspection by the construction code official or an authorized representative.

(d) A building code official may not issue a permit for any property requiring access to a highway under the Department of Transportation's jurisdiction unless the permit contains notice that a highway occupancy permit is required under section 420 of the State Highway Law (36 P. S. § 670-420) before driveway access to a Commonwealth highway is permitted.

(e) A building code official may issue a permit for the construction of the foundations or other parts of a building or structure before the construction documents for the whole building or structure are submitted if the permit applicant previously filed adequate information and detailed statements for the building or structure under the Uniform Construction Code. Approval under this section is not assurance that the building code official will issue a permit for the entire building or structure.

(f) Issuance of a permit does not bar prosecution or other legal action for violations of the act, the Uniform Construction Code or a construction ordinance. A building code official may suspend or revoke a permit issued under the Uniform Construction Code when the owner does not make the required changes directed by the building code official under subsection (c), when the permit is issued in error, on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information or in violation of any act, regulation, ordinance or the Uniform Construction Code.

(g) A permit becomes invalid unless the authorized construction work begins within 180 days after the permit's issuance or if the authorized construction work permit is suspended or abandoned for 180 days after the work has commenced. A permit holder may submit a written request for an extension of time to commence construction for just cause. The building code official may grant extensions of time to commence construction in writing. A permit may be valid for no more than 5 years from its issue date.

(h) The permit holder shall keep a copy of the permit on the work site until the completion of the construction.

(i) A permit applicant may request extensions of time or variances or appeal a building code official's action on the permit application to a board of appeals under § 403.122 (relating to appeals, variances and extensions of time) in a municipality which has adopted an ordinance for the administration and enforcement of the act or municipalities which are parties to an agreement for the joint administration and enforcement of the act.

(j) Work shall be installed in accordance with the approved construction documents. The permit holder shall submit a revised set of construction documents for approval for changes made during construction that are not in accordance with the approved construction documents.

(k) A permit is not valid until the required fees are collected under § 401.2a (relating to municipal and third-party agency fees).

§ 403.64. Inspections.

(a) A construction code official shall inspect all construction for which a permit was issued. The permit holder shall insure that the construction is accessible for inspection. An inspection does not bar prosecution or other legal action for violation of the Uniform Construction Code.

(b) The permit holder or an authorized agent shall notify the construction code official when work is ready for inspection and provide access for the inspection.

(c) The construction code official shall notify a permit holder whether if construction complies with the Uniform Construction Code or fails to comply with the Uniform Construction Code.

(d) A construction code official shall make the following inspections and file inspection reports relating to Uniform Construction Code compliance in all of the following areas:

(1) Foundation inspection.

(2) Plumbing, mechanical and electrical system inspection.

(3) Frame and masonry inspection.

(4) Wallboard inspection. (e) The construction code official may conduct other inspections to ascertain compliance with the Uniform Construction Code or municipal ordinances.

(f) A construction code official shall conduct a final inspection of the completed construction work and file a final inspection report that indicates compliance with the Uniform Construction Code.

(g) A third-party agency under contract with a permit holder shall submit a copy of the final inspection report to the property owner, builder and the lender designated by the builder.

§ 403.65. Certificate of occupancy.

(a) A residential building may not be used or occupied without a certificate of occupancy issued by a building code official.

(b) A building code official shall issue a certificate of occupancy after receipt of a final inspection report that indicates compliance with the Uniform Construction Code and ordinance within 5 business days or within 10 business days in cities of the first class. The certificate of occupancy shall contain all of the following information:

(1) The permit number and address of the residential building.

(2) The name and address of the owner of the residential building.

(3) A description of the portion of the residential building covered by the occupancy permit.

(4) A statement that the described portion of the residential building as inspected for compliance with the Uniform Construction Code.

(5) The name of the building code official who issued the occupancy permit.

(6) The construction code edition applicable to the occupancy permit.

(7) If an automatic sprinkler system is provided.

(8) Any special stipulations and conditions relating to the building permit.

(c) A building code official may issue a certificate of occupancy for a portion of a residential building if the portion independently meets the Uniform Construction Code.

(d) A building code official may suspend or revoke a certificate of occupancy when the certificate was issued in error, on the basis of incorrect information supplied by the permit applicant, or in violation of the Uniform Construction Code. Before a certificate of occupancy is revoked, a building owner may request a hearing before the board of appeals in accordance with § 403.122 (relating to appeals, variances and extensions of time).

(e) A third-party agency under contract with a building permit holder shall submit a copy of the certificate of occupancy to the municipality.

(f) A building code official may issue a temporary certificate of occupancy for a portion or portions of the building or structure before the completion of the entire work covered by the permit if the portion or portions may be occupied safely. The building code official shall set a time period during which the temporary certificate of occupancy is valid.