

Residential Construction Permit Guidelines – UCC

Note: *This information pertains to one- and two-family dwellings only and is not intended to be all inclusive. The BCO for a municipality should always be contacted for a final determination of PA UCC permit requirements for a project. The exemptions listed do not apply to commercial (i.e., other than one- and two-family dwellings) projects.*

Residential projects **REQUIRING** construction permits:

- All new residential construction (new dwellings).
- All additions to existing residential construction (adding stories/increasing size of a dwelling, new floor area).
- Detached structures 1,000 square feet or larger, that are accessory to a single-family dwelling.
- Enclosing an existing porch/patio that leads to grade.
- New decks with any portion of the walking surface greater than 30 inches above ground level.
- New decks with roofs or coverings.
- New attached decks (this is considered a structural alteration to the dwelling).
- Installing hot tubs or spas.
- Constructing an in-ground swimming pool.
- Installing any swimming pool with a water depth of 24 inches or more, including storable pools and above ground pools.
- Fences higher than 6 feet.
- Retaining walls higher than 4 feet.
- Structural alterations to an existing dwelling (altering rafters, joists, beams, load-bearing walls, etc.).
- Changes to a means of egress (altering exit doors, stairs & exterior steps, handrails, guards, ramps).
- If converting any portion of a residential dwelling or accessory structure to a commercial use.
- Converting a storage attic into a habitable space (depending on floor load).
- Installation of solar panels.
- Emergency repair that requires a permit (work can be done if permit application is submitted within 3 days of repair or replacement).

Residential projects NOT REQUIRING construction permits (unless by Municipal amendments):

- The following structures, if the structure has a building area less than 1,000 square feet and is accessory to a detached one-family dwelling, except as might be required by an ordinance adopted under section 503 of the act (35 P. S. § 7210.503):
 - Carports.
 - Detached private garages.
 - Greenhouses.
 - Sheds.
- An agricultural building.
- Manufactured or industrialized housing shipped from the factory under section 901(a) of the act (35 P. S. § 7210.901(a)) as provided in § 403.25 (relating to manufactured and industrialized housing).
- 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).
- Construction of individual sewage disposal systems under 25 PA Code Chapter 73 (relating to on-lot sewage treatment facilities).
- Alterations to residential buildings which do not make structural changes or changes to means of egress, except as required by ordinances in effect under sections 303(b)(1) or 503 of the acts (35 P. S. § 7210.303(b)(1) and 7210.503). Under this subsection, a structural change does not include a minor framing change needed to replace existing windows or doors.
- Repairs to residential buildings, except as required by ordinances in effect under sections 303(b)(1) and 503 of the act.
- Installation of aluminum or vinyl siding onto an existing residential or an existing commercial building, except as might be required by ordinances in effect under section 303(b)(1) (35 P. S. § 7210.303(b)(1)) or section 503 of the act.
- 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:
 - Fences that are no more than 6 feet high.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Sidewalks and driveways that are 30 inches or less above adjacent grade and not placed over a basement or story below it.
 - Prefabricated swimming pools that are less than 24 inches deep.
 - Swings and other playground equipment accessory to a one- or two-family dwelling.
 - 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.
 - Installation of an uncovered deck where the floor of the deck is no more than 30 inches above grade.
 - Installation or rearrangement of communications wiring.
- An ordinary repair does not require a permit. The following are not ordinary repairs:
 - Cutting away a load-bearing wall, partition, or portion of a wall.
 - The removal or cutting of any structural beam or load-bearing support.
 - The removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements.
 - 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.