

CITIZENS' GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR A BUILDING PERMIT

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This Citizens' Guide is meant to provide Building Permit applicants with general PA Uniform Construction Code information to assist them with their construction projects in the Armstrong County Joint Purchasing Program Municipalities. This Guide, while informative, is not all-inclusive. Should you need information not included here, please use the **contact information at the end of this Guide** or consult with your contractor or your selected Building Code Inspector for your project.

Question - Do I need a Building Permit for my planned residential construction or remodeling project?

Answer – YES for the following:

- You are building a new home.
- You are building an addition to an existing home.
- You are making structural alterations to an existing home such as installing a new window or door in a new location or constructing or removing an interior structural bearing wall or partition.
- Swimming pools: You are installing an in-ground or above-ground pool with a water level at or above 24 inches in height. This includes the initial set-up of inflatable pools.
- You are installing a hot tub and/or spa.
- You are building a deck at or above 30 inches above ground level.
- You are installing a fence at or above six (6) feet in height.
- You are building a retaining wall at or above four (4) feet in height.
- You are installing a new water or sewer lateral outside the residence.
- You are building an accessory building at or in excess of one thousand (1,000) square feet in area.
- Where Manufactured Housing engineering and inspection documentation is provided, the UCC governs only utility connections, all foundation requirements (full basement, frost walls and support systems), grading, entrance and exit steps and any issues not addressed in the Manufactured Housing documentation.

This may not be an all-inclusive list depending on your individual project. Check with your contractor and Inspection Agency for your project's actual permit requirements.

Question – Do I need a Building Permit for upgrading my residential electrical service within my home?

Answer – No, but certain types of new or upgraded electrical work need to be inspected by a licensed electrical inspector. Check with your electrical contractor or electric provider.

Question – If I need a Building Permit, what do I do next?

Answer – Contact your local Municipality Secretary or Official and ask for the **Frequently Asked Questions for Construction Permits Folder**, which includes:

- The Citizens' Guide to Applying for a Building Permit.
- A Uniform Construction Permit Application form for the Building Permit. This Application must be filled out completely by the citizen and/or contractor.
- The current Fee Schedule Summary for inspection services from each of the Third Party Agencies contracted to your municipality.
- Workers' Compensation form for your contractor to complete as proof of insurance coverage.

Question – How do I select a Third Party Inspection Agency?

Answer – You may select a Third Party Inspection Agency from any of the contracted agencies listed in the Citizens' Guide to Applying for a Building Permit. The agencies' contact information is listed at the end of this Citizens' Guide and on the Fee Schedule.

Question – What are the requirements for plans and drawings of my project?

Answer – First, you will need two (2) sets of building plans and / or drawings and specifications for your residential project. The plans/drawings/specifications for your contractor and the Inspection Agency should include the following when needed:

- Site Plan Drawing
- Structural Drawings
- Foundation Drawings
- Floor Plans
- Roof Framing Drawings
- Floor Framing Drawings
- Electrical Schematics
- Mechanical Schematics
- Plumbing Schematics

Question – Do I need a Demolition Permit?

Answer –Yes, for the demolition of any structure.

Question – Whom do I contact about utilities overhead and underground before we do any earthmoving or digging?

Answer – Contact **Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc.** at the following:

<http://www.paonecall.org/> or call 1-800-242-1776

Question – Do I need a Zoning Permit?

Answer – Check with your local municipal officials.

Question – Do I need Water and/or Sewer Tap Applications or Permits?

Answer – Check with the local municipal officials for information concerning water and sewer authority contact information.

Question – Do I need a Sewage Permit for an on lot sewage system?

Answer - Contact the Sewage Enforcement Agency of Armstrong County at 724-548-7743.

Question – Do I need a Driveway Permit (Highway Occupancy Permit)?

Answer – Check with your local municipality and with –

**Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Highway Occupancy Information
District 10-0 Armstrong County**

General Permit Information: 724 357-2831

Occupancy Fax Number: 724 357-2667

Permit Manager:

Richard Gill 724 357-2831

Occupancy Telephone Numbers:

Ken Villella 724 357-2898

Frank Mouser 724 357-2898

Michele Stiles 724 357-2818

<http://www.dot.state.pa.us/> Click on Special Interest Area, Permits, Occupancy Permits, Contacts and then on the PA map's #10 to access important Highway Occupancy information.

Question – If I have questions regarding my land, subdivisions or land development, whom do I contact?

Answer – Contact the County Department of Planning and Development and ask for The Citizens' Guide to Developing Your Property. Call 724-548-3223.

Question – How do I determine if I am in a Flood Plain?

Answer – Contact:

**Harrisburg UCC Flood Plain Management:
Mitch Hoffman or Kerry Wilson at 1-888-223-6837
or <http://www.dced.state.pa.us>
or <http://www.inventpa.com/>**

Or you may contact -

Select Business Services
Mr. Randy Hurlburt
6000 West Ridge Road, Suite B
Erie, Pennsylvania 16506
Telephone 1-800-805-0592 Extension #210 or #215

Or you may contact -

Flood Plain Information
The Governor's Center for Local Government Services
Southwest Regional Office
1403A State Office Building
300 Liberty Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Southwest Regional Office – Michael Foreman 412-565-5199

Question - Do I need an Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plan (E&SPC Plan) for my construction project's earth disturbance?

Answer – Contact – Dave Rupert 724-548-3425 or email c-drupert@state.pa.us or <http://www.armstrongcd.org>

Or visit –

Armstrong Conservation District
124 Armsdale Road
Room B-1
Kittanning, PA 16201

Question – Who do I contact for more information regarding the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code or information about certified inspection agencies?

Answer – Contact the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry at the following:

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry
Uniform Construction Code Program Questions
<http://www.dli.state.pa.us.codes/> or call 717-787-3323.

If you have any further questions or comments contact –

Grant Kanish, Municipal Services Coordinator
Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development
402 Market Street
Kittanning, PA 16201
Telephone - 724-548-3223
Fax – 724-545-7050
E-mail – glkanish@co.armstrong.pa.us

Please make note of the following changes to the PA UCC under Act 92 of 2004:

Senate Bill 1139, which became law on July 16, 2004, enacts a number of changes to the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code. The law took effect immediately.

Here is a summary of these changes:

- The most prominent change: Excludes all residential alterations under section 104 if there are no structural or egress changes. However, a municipality may enact an ordinance requiring permits for this work by meeting the requirements of section 503 (b) through (k) of Act 45, or, if it had required permits for this work in a municipal building code ordinance in effect as of July 1, 1999, the requirement would remain in effect.
- Amends the definition of agricultural building in section 103 to include a milk house and carriage house owned and used by members of a recognized religious sect. These and other agricultural buildings are excluded under section 104.
- Allows exclusions for recreational cabins used for noncommercial purposes, and mandates that these structures be equipped with smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Amends the definition of utility and miscellaneous use structures (garages, carports, greenhouses and sheds accessory to a detached single-family home) to allow these buildings to be excluded from UCC coverage, if they are less than 1,000 square feet. The previous exclusion was 500 square feet. However, now a municipality may enact an ordinance requiring permits for this work by meeting the requirements of section 503 (b) through (k) of Act 45.
- Battery-operated smoke detectors only will be required when alterations, repairs or additions to residential dwellings are made.
- Section 901(b) is amended to allow an exemption for one-room schoolhouses from the UCC's electrical requirements, if solely members of a recognized religious sect utilize the structure.

Section 901 is amended to exclude the International Fire Code restrictions for natural cut trees (Christmas trees) in certain occupancy groups. However, a municipality may enact an ordinance restricting the placement of natural cut trees in any occupancy group without meeting the requirements of section 503 (b) through (k).

**2007 JOINT PURCHASING PROGRAM 3RD PARTY INSPECTION
AGENCY**

GUARDIAN INSPECTION SERVICES, INC.

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