



Charlestown Township  
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### ***Guide to Permits for Construction Projects and Changes in Use***

On July 1, 2004, Charlestown Township implemented the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC). This new code created some changes to regulations and procedures for obtaining permits for construction projects.

Prior to the Township accepting building permit applications, the applicant must follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Complete the Zoning Application and provide information as noted, including three (3) sets of site plans.
2. Complete the Erosion, Sedimentation and Grading Control (E & S) Permit Application for all improvements creating a footprint greater than 100 square feet. Include three (3) sets of site plans. Submit a copy of the PennDOT Permit for the driveway (if applicable). All swimming pool applications require an E & S Permit.
3. Upon receipt of the approved Zoning Permit and E & S Permit, the Building Plans will be accepted. Applications must include the name of the Township approved Electrical Underwriter. Additional permits, such as but not limited to, highway occupancy, sanitary sewer, and Chester County Health Department permits must be included with the Building Permit Application.

### **Applications not including all necessary information will not be accepted.**

Please use the information included in this packet to help you determine what permits you need and to apply for them. If you have questions that are not answered, please contact the Township for assistance.

## **Types of Permits**

Charlestown Township issues three types of permits related to building and construction.

### Zoning Permit

A Zoning Permit is required whenever your project involves placing, constructing, expanding a physical structure on your property (including driveways), or changing the use of your property. A Zoning Permit is also required for Demolition and Signs. This permit confirms that the Zoning Ordinance allows the work or change in use that you are proposing.

### Grading, Erosion and Sedimentation (E & S) Permit

All new homes and improvements creating a footprint of at least 500 square feet must have an approved E & S plan which is submitted for approval with the Zoning Permit Application. Disturbances and impervious surface coverage over 500 square feet requires a \$200.00 fee and an engineered plan. Disturbances and coverage under 500 square feet has no extra fee, and a hand drawn sketch plan is sufficient.

### Building Permit

A Building Permit is required whenever your construction project will need to be inspected to insure that it meets the standards of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC). The UCC covers all aspects of construction: framing, electric, plumbing and mechanical. Any project that will affect any of these systems must have a Building Permit. The UCC uses the following codes as its standards:

- International Residential Code 2006 – for Residential Construction
- International Building Code 2006 – For Commercial Construction

## **Construction Exempt from Permits**

The following projects do not require a permit:

- Repair and replacement projects which do not involve structural changes or changes to the plumbing or electric systems.
- Replacement windows and doors of the same size.
- Interior Remodeling (Alterations) that do not move or change walls, or involve plumbing or electrical work
- Re-roofing.
- Replacement of plumbing fixtures, such as sinks and toilets.
- Replacement of switches, receptacles, and lighting fixtures rated at 20 amps or less.
- Landscaping fences (ones that do not fully enclose an area). However, they must meet all fence requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

## **Building Inspection**

The Township's inspectors will perform all inspections with the exception of Electrical. Electrical inspections will be performed by third-party inspectors that have been approved and registered by Charlestown Township. The list of electrical inspectors is enclosed and is also available at the township office and at [www.charlestown.org](http://www.charlestown.org).

## **Permit Process**

All permits and accompanying drawings and forms are to be submitted in triplicate. Fees are paid at the time of application.

1. The property owner and contractor will complete the Zoning Permit Application and E & S Permit Application.
2. The contractor will register with the Township if he has not previously done so.
3. If you intend to apply for a Building Permit that involves electrical work, an approved electrical inspector must be contacted to perform required electrical inspections.
4. When the completed applications are returned to the Township, they will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with township regulations.
5. Based on the review, the Zoning Officer/Building Code Official will either issue or deny the permits.
6. The property owner and contractor will then complete the Building Permit Application, including three (3) sets of plans of the structure.
7. When the Building Permit application is returned to the Township, it will be reviewed for completeness and date stamped.
8. The Building Code Official will either issue or deny the permit within 15 working days for residential, or 30 working days for commercial.
9. Construction may begin when the permits have been released and picked up.
10. Inspections of the ongoing work must be coordinated with the Building Code Official.
11. When the project is completed and has met all construction codes, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued within 5 working days of final inspection/compliance.

## **Requirements for Common Projects**

### New Home

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Smoke detectors in the entire house must be upgraded to operate from the house's electrical system with battery backup.
5. Setbacks vary by zoning district.
6. On-site Sewer and Well Permit from Chester County Health Dept.
7. Highway Occupancy Permit from PennDOT is required, if applicable

### House Addition

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Smoke detectors in the entire house must be upgraded to operate from the house's electrical system with battery backup.
5. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.
6. Adequacy letter for the existing On-Site System from the Chester County Health Department is required (if applicable)

### Detached Garage/Accessory Building

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Must be located in the rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
5. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines

### Screened Porch/Four Season Room

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.

### Sunroom/Three Season Room

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.

### Storage Shed or Gazebo

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Must be located in the rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
5. Building Plans may consist of a drawing or brochure of the shed if it is a pre-fabricated structure.
6. If there is no permanent foundation, footers, such as 4" x 4" timber, should be dug to a depth of 3 feet and bolted or otherwise anchored to the structure.
7. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

### Patio

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if over 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.

### Deck

1. Zoning Permit required
2. Building Permit required
3. E & S Permit required for decks over 100 square feet
4. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district

### Fences

1. Zoning Permit required except for small sections of fence used for landscaping or privacy
2. Fences may be up to the property line, but not on it.
3. Refer to Zoning Ordinance for requirements even if your fence does not require a permit.

### Finishing Basement

1. Building Permit required; no zoning permit is required.
2. Direct access to the outside must be provided
3. Smoke detectors in the entire house must be upgraded to operate from the house's electrical system with battery backup.

Alterations – Interior Remodel that involves moving or changing of walls, or if plumbing or electrical system is modified.

1. Zoning Permit is required
2. Building Permit is required
3. Non-Residential Use & Occupancy is required for commercial tenant fit-ups

### Replacement Windows and Doors – if larger than the original

1. Building Permit is required

### Above Ground Pool

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Pool Owner Responsibility Form must be completed and notarized.
5. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
6. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

### In-Ground Pool

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Pool Owner Responsibility Form must be completed and notarized.
5. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
6. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

### Hot Tub/Spa

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
5. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

Impervious Surface – groundcover construction that does not allow percolation into the soil; including but not limited to tennis/sport courts, parking areas, patios, pillars, and free standing walls.

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit Required if over 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines

## GUIDE FOR COMPLETING THE BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION

1. All other approvals must be obtained first, if required: including but not limited to: contractor registration, zoning permit, E & S Permit, Well Permit (addition or new house construction) and Sewer Permit (addition or new house construction). In some situations, prior approval from your homeowner's association, a decision from the Zoning Hearing Board or for conditional use may be required.
2. Since this application form is used for a variety of projects, all the blank lines on the form do not have to be completed.
3. Both the homeowner and contractor must sign the application.
4. Tax map information and zoning district can be provided by Township personnel.
5. Describe what you are doing in a little detail. Provide enough information to allow the Township to understand the use for the construction. Examples:
  - Adding a three-season sunroom on a slab foundation to the first floor rear of the house
  - Remodeling the kitchen/removing partition between dining area and kitchen
  - Finishing a 12' x 16' area of the basement as a family room
  - Placing a 12' x 16' utility shed in the rear yard
6. Construction outside the walls of the dwelling requires measuring distances to the property lines. These measurements are also required on the plot plan to accompany the Zoning Permit application. Provide a drawing of your lot ("Plot Plan") showing sufficient detail.
7. If you are building outside the walls of the dwelling, or setting down a structure on the property, give the width, depth, height, number of stories, type of construction, floor area, and cost of the project. The property must be staked before the permit is submitted.
8. If your project is within the dwelling, provide a floor plan of the existing dwelling and show proposed changes.
9. Once your permit is approved, please note that you must build your project according to the approved plans. If you vary from your plans you may inadvertently violate the zoning ordinance, triggering the need to apply to the Zoning Hearing Board for relief, which may or may not be granted.

### Additional Information

For further information regarding permits, contact the Charlestown Township staff. For questions other than basic inquiries, you will be referred to the Zoning Officer/Building Code Official.

**4030 Whitehorse Road  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the Devault Building  
Devault, PA 19432**

**Phone: 610-240-0326 Fax: 610-240-0328**

**E-Mail: [admin1@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:admin1@charlestown.pa.us)**

**Office Hours: 9 AM – 3 PM Mon. – Fri.**

## BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please ensure all of the following is properly completed before application is submitted; this will eliminate processing delays. If any part of the applicable information required is not supplied, we will deny processing the permit and return it to you.

- Zoning Permit has been previously submitted and approved.
- Soil & Erosion Permit has been previously submitted and approved. (Applies if earth disturbance will exceed 100 square feet.)
- Contractor License has been previously submitted and approved.
- Completed Building Permit Application (applicable sections) in its entirety. Original triplicate application form must be used.
- Workers Compensation Insurance certificate. Please obtain a copy of your insurance certificate from your agent prior to submission to the Township.
- Three (3) copies of Workers Compensation form, filled out appropriately. If claiming an Exemption, the form has been notarized.
- Three (3) copies of the Plot Plan (if required)
- Three (3) copies of Construction Plan. (For new construction and extensive additions, plans must be signed, sealed and dated by a registered design professional.)
- Three (3) copies of On-Site Sewer Permit (If Applicable)
- Three (3) copies of On-Site Well Permit (If Applicable)
- Three (3) copies of PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (If Applicable)
- Three (3) copies of Electrical Plan (If Applicable)
- Three (3) copies of Pool Form (If Applicable)
- Three (3) copies of Approval Letter from Homeowners Association (If Applicable)
- Permit Fees