



Charlestown Township

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Guide to Permits for Construction Projects and Changes in Use

Charlestown Township has adopted the Pa. Uniform Construction Code (UCC). The applicant must follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Complete the Zoning Application and provide information as noted, including two (2) 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 two (2) 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.

[NOTE: Only 2 sets of site plans total are required if you are submitting both a zoning application and an E & S application. We do not need 4 copies.]

3. Complete the Building Permit Application with 2 sets of building plans and any additional permits, such as but not limited to, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC. Applicable permits from other agencies such as PennDOT for highway occupancy, and Chester County Health Department permits for septic or well, must be included with your submission to the Township.
4. Residential contractors and subcontractors (except new home builders) must provide a PA Home Improvement Contractor Registration Number or complete Township registration form with fee. Commercial and new home builders must register with the Township with fee.
5. Each contractor and subcontractor must provide a current Certificate of Insurance with Charlestown Township listed as the Certificate Holder.
6. Each contractor and subcontractor must provide proof of Workers Compensation Insurance or complete the Township's exemption form, which must be notarized.
7. If the property is subject to a Homeowner's Association, a letter of approval from the HOA must be included in your submission.
8. All applicants must remit the required plan review fee when submitting applications.

The property owner must sign all permit applications or provide a notarized letter from the property owner authorizing a single agent to sign for them.

All applications must have the Owner's and Contractor's e-mail addresses. Applications will not be accepted without them.

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 six 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 Building 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 100 square feet must have an 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 have a \$100.00 fee, and a hand drawn sketch plan is sufficient. No permit is required for disturbance under 100 square feet.

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:

- National Electrical Code 2014
- International Residential Code 2015 – for Residential Construction
- International Building Code 2015 – For Commercial Construction

Electrical Permit

An Electrical Permit is required for all electrical improvement projects. Replacements of existing receptacles, switches and light fixtures are exempt.

Plumbing Permit

A Plumbing Permit is required for all plumbing improvement projects. Replacements of existing features without relocation are exempt.

HVAC Permit

An HVAC/Fuel Tank Permit is required for all HVAC or fuel tank improvement projects. Replacements of “Like for Like” systems without replication or the addition of duct work are exempt.

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, electric, or HVAC 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 if less than 25% of the roof is being replaced.
- 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, except electrical. Electrical inspections are performed by United Inspection Agency.

Permit Process

All accompanying drawings and forms are to be submitted in duplicate with one of each permit application. Fees are to be paid before a permit is released.

1. The property owner and contractor will complete the permit applications.
2. Contractor must have a PA Home Improvement Contractor Registration Number and a current Certificate of Insurance, including Workers' Compensation, with Charlestown Township as the Certificate holder. Commercial and new home builders need to register with the Township.
3. When the completed applications with accompanying documents and plans are submitted to the Township, they will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with township regulations. The submission package will be date stamped when it has been determined to be administratively complete.
4. Based on the review, the Zoning Officer/Building Code Official will either issue or deny the permits.
5. The Building Code Official will either issue or deny the permit within 15 working days for residential, or 30 working days for commercial.
6. Construction may begin when the permits have been released and picked up or mailed.

7. Inspections of the ongoing work must be coordinated with the Township Office by email at admin2@charlestown.pa.us. Requests must be made no later than 3:00 p.m., 48 hours prior to requested date for inspection.
8. When the project is completed and has met all construction codes, a Certificate of Occupancy or Letter of Compliance will be issued within 5 working days of final inspection/compliance.
9. All requests for inspection must be made by email only to: admin2@charlestown.pa.us 48 hours prior to expected inspection.

Requirements for Common Projects

New Home

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required
3. Building Permit, Electrical, Plumbing and HVAC Permits required; Fire Suppression, if applicable.
4. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
5. Smoke detectors in the entire house must operate from the house's electrical system with battery backup. (One detector per level and one per sleeping area.)
6. Setbacks vary by zoning district.
7. On-site Sewer and Well Permit from Chester County Health Dept.
8. Highway Occupancy Permit from PennDOT is required, if applicable

House Addition

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC and/or Fire Suppression Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. Smoke detectors in the entire house must be upgraded to operate from the house's electrical system with battery backup.
7. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.
8. 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. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. Must be located in the rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
7. 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 if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. 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 if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.

Storage Shed, Gazebo or Temporary "Pod" Type Storage Unit

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required if larger than 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required for sheds if larger than 200 square feet.
4. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
5. Must be located in the rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
6. Building Plans may consist of a drawing or brochure of the shed if it is a pre-fabricated structure.
7. 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.
8. 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. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
4. Setbacks are the same as for the house and vary by zoning district.

Deck

1. Zoning Permit required
2. E & S Permit required for decks over 100 square feet
3. Building Permit required
4. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
5. 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. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
4. Refer to Zoning Ordinance for requirements even if your fence does not require a permit.

Finishing Basement

1. Building Permit required; no zoning permits are required.
2. Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC, and/or E & S permits required (if applicable to your project)
3. Direct access to the outside must be provided
4. 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. Building Permit is required
2. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
3. Non-Residential Use & Occupancy is required for commercial tenant fit-ups

Replacement Windows and Doors – only required 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. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. **Pool Owner Responsibility Form** must be completed and notarized.
7. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
8. 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. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. **Pool Owner Responsibility Form** must be completed and notarized.
7. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
8. 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 if 24" deep or deeper.
4. Electrical, Plumbing and/or HVAC Permits required (if applicable to your project)
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. Must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
7. Setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

Generator - Residential

1. Electrical Permit required
2. Specifications for the generator, switch gear and a diagram for the wiring
3. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
4. Must be located in rear or side yard. If side yard abuts a street, screening will be required so the unit is not visible from the street.
5. Setbacks are 21 feet from the side and rear property lines with no more than 57 dBL at the property line. A Sound Buffer will be required if sound levels exceed 57 dBL.
6. Permit includes installation of the propane tank.

Solar Panels – Residential, Roof or Ground

1. Zoning Permit required (with site plan showing location of equipment if ground array)
2. Building Permit required, with structural engineer's report if roof mounted.
3. Electrical Permit required
4. Specifications for the system
5. Approval letter from your HOA, if applicable
6. For ground array: must be located in rear yard, or side yard if it does not abut a street.
7. For ground array: setbacks are 20 feet from the side and rear property lines.

Co-Locating or Other Work on Existing Cell Tower

1. Zoning Permit required
2. Electrical Permit required
3. Building Permit required
4. Plans and Specifications for the equipment to be added

Impervious Surface – groundcover construction that does not allow percolation into the soil; including but not limited to driveways, 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 accompanying applications, documents and plans are to be included in your submission, including but not limited to: PA 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 if not applicable to your project.
3. The **homeowner must sign** the application unless a notarized letter is executed by the property owner authorizing the contractor to sign as Agent.
4. Tax map information and zoning district can be provided by Township personnel.
5. Describe what you are doing in 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/BCO.

Charlestown Township
4030 Whitehorse Road
2nd Floor of the Devault Building
Devault, PA 19432

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

E-Mail: admin2@charlestown.pa.us

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.

___ One (1) copy Zoning Permit Application

___ One (1) copy Soil & Erosion Permit Application. (Fee applies if earth disturbance will exceed 500 square feet.)

___ Contractor (and all subcontractors) must have PA Home Improvement Contractor Registration number and a current Certificate of Insurance with Charlestown Township as the Certificate Holder. Commercial and new home builders need to register with the Township.

___ One (1) Copy Completed Building Permit Application (applicable sections) in its entirety.

___ Workers Compensation Insurance certificate showing Charlestown Township as the Certificate Holder for all contractors and subcontractors. Please obtain a copy of your insurance certificate from your agent prior to submission to the Township.

___ One (1) copy of Workers Compensation Insurance Form. If claiming an Exemption, the form must be notarized.

___ Two (2) copies of the Plot (Site) Plan (if required)

___ Two (2) copies of Construction Plan. (For commercial construction, alterations, and additions, plans must be signed, sealed and dated by a registered design professional. Residential is exempt.)

___ One (1) copy of On-Site Sewer Permit (If Applicable)

___ One (1) copy of On-Site Well Permit (If Applicable)

___ One (1) copy of PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (If Applicable)

___ Two (2) copies of Electrical Plan (If Applicable)

___ One (1) copy of Pool Form (If Applicable)

___ One (1) copy of Plumbing Permit Application (If applicable)

___ One (1) copy of HVAC Permit Application (if applicable)

___ One (1) copy of Approval Letter from Homeowners Association (If Applicable)

___ Fees will be determined by the Zoning Officer/Building Code Official and do not need to accompany your submission. You will be notified of the amount due, and fees must be paid before the permits are released. A plan review fee (\$100.00 for residential, \$200.00 for commercial) must be submitted with any application and will be forfeited if the project is abandoned. This fee is applied toward your total fee charge.