

BUILDING SAFETY WEEK NEWSLETTER

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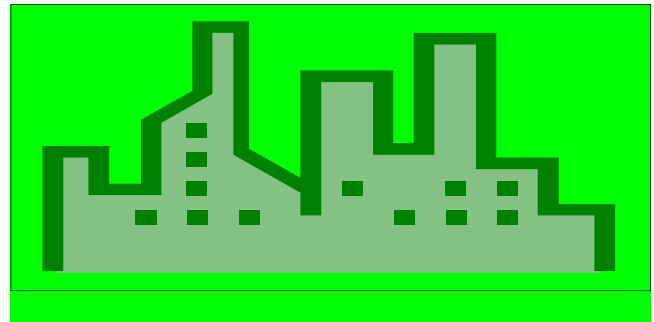
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A MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER JOHN ELFREY REGARDING INTERNATIONAL BUILDING SAFETY WEEK MAY 5TH – 11TH, 2008

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

America will celebrate Building Safety Week from May 5 through 11. The theme this year is "Building Safety: Where You Live, Work and Play." First observed in 1980, Building Safety Week annually raises public awareness of critical safety issues affecting every person, regardless of age or occupation. These entail the structural soundness of the buildings where we live and work, reliability of fire alarm and suppression systems, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems, and energy efficiency and sustainability. The Department of Licenses and Inspections is participating again this year and brings this newsletter to our customers to highlight this event. Mayor Nutter's mission for City government is to provide quality services



to improve public health and safety, economic vitality, education, neighborhood livability and civic engagement. All of these things are impacted by building safety through the Department of Licenses and Inspections. Inspectors, plan reviewers and others in the Department work to ensure the safety of the structures in which all of us live, work, attend school, worship and play. We work daily to ensure safety in the built environment.

When you obtain a permit, you obtain the plan review and inspection services of certified professionals with knowledge of the code requirements to help ensure your project and your building is safe. Throughout this newsletter you will find examples of how the Department of Licenses and Inspections is working to improve its services to you, our customers, while ensuring safety for all who live, work and visit the City of Philadelphia.



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**Building
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“Philadelphia was asked to participate in this effort because of its unique position in the State and because of the lack of deck failures. ...”

Employee News – Joseph Flanagan, Permit Control

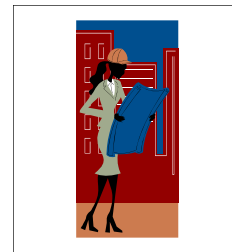
Joe Flanagan is the Supervisor of the Department's Permit Control Unit in our Permit Services area in the Concourse of the Municipal Services Building. Joe and his staff are responsible for processing all building permit applications in the Concourse as well as issuing all zoning and building permits for residential alterations and additions. In the past year, they have completed over 4,500 plan reviews.

Joe recently represented the Department of Licenses and Inspections at a Pennsylvania Housing Research Center (PHRC) pilot training program for contractors and code officials. He was one of 12 people from across the State in attendance to provide feedback on a new training program on the construction of residential decks. PHRC uses the permit surcharge money we collect for the State to develop and conduct training.

Philadelphia was asked to participate in this effort because of its unique position in the State and because of the lack of deck failures. Every summer we read about deck failures in other areas, but have yet to experience that here in Philadelphia. Our EZ Deck Permit standard, which Joe was instrumental in developing, allows people to construct decks without submitting plans by requiring the structure to be slightly above minimum design.

The money saved in developing construction plans can be used for the construction materials. Additionally, our inspectors have been very thorough in ensuring proper connections of the deck to the house, a typical point of failure in decks outside of Philadelphia.

Joe Flanagan has also been asked to attend a national 2-day seminar in Virginia on “Streamlining the Permit Process.” He and his work on the EZ Permit process are prime examples of how our Department provides great customer service while maintaining safety levels.



You May be Going to the Wrong L&I

Everyone knows when you are applying for a building permit in Philadelphia, you need to go to the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I). Or do you?

The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (PA UCC) went into effect in 2004 across the Commonwealth. Local jurisdictions, like Philadelphia, were required to adopt the PA UCC and its regulations to enforce construction codes. These regulations stipulate that the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (PA L&I) will conduct plan review and inspections for all State-owned buildings.

The Pennsylvania Code defines “State-owned buildings” as follows:

A building owned by or to be constructed for Commonwealth entities consisting of the General Assembly, the Unified Judicial System, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, an executive agency, independent agency, and a State-affiliated entity or State-related institution.

This would include locations like Temple University, but would not include any court or local, regional or metropolitan transportation authority.

So keep in mind, if your project was designed after August 2004 and is associated with a State-owned building, State-related institution or a State-affiliated entity, you need to file your construction permit applications with the PA Department of Labor and Industry. Philadelphia’s L&I still maintains Zoning Code permit requirements for these projects.



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Building Safety Week Newsletter

The Simple Permit Process

Many people are intimidated by the construction permit process and try to avoid it rather than utilize it to help develop a code compliant project and therefore a safe building. Below are the steps in the permit process to help you overcome your fear of the unknown.

DO A LITTLE RESEARCH

Our staff wants your project to be a success and will help you avoid potential problems that could cost you time and money. The Department's web site (www.phila.gov/li) will provide you with the resources and information needed for compliance with the applicable codes and ordinances affecting building projects. There you can download a copy of an application for a building permit. You may also speak with a Department representative at your local District Office or in the Concourse of the Municipal Services Building. You may be asked some basic questions (What are you planning to do? Where?), advised of any requirements, and, if necessary, referred to other departments for their approval.

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

At this stage you will document the "Who, What, When, Where, and How" of the job, along with any sketches or plans of the proposed work. Our website can help you in developing your plans.

REVIEW PROCESS

The certified plan examiner will review your plans and determine if your project is in compliance with local requirements. If your plans meet these requirements, a permit is issued. If not, the code official may request additional information or suggest solutions to help correct any problems.

LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS IS COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING SERVICE STANDARDS:

Commercial Building Permit Applications;

Approved within 25 working days for a code complaint submittal

Reviewed within 15 working days and applicant notified of need for a variance or additional plans information.

Residential Building Permit Applications;

Permit approved within 15 working days for a code complaint submittal

Permit reviewed within 15 working days and applicant notified of need for a variance or additional plans information

RECEIVE PERMIT

Now that you have been approved for a permit, you have legal permission to start construction. A fee, based on the size of the job, is collected to cover the cost of the application, the review, and the inspection process. A certified inspector is available to you should you have any questions concerning your project. You should consider your inspector as an ally who will help you make your project a success. Separate permits are required for electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work.

JOB-SITE VISITS

On-site inspections will be required to make certain the work conforms to the permit, local codes, and plans. Again, you will have access to the expertise of the inspector to help you with questions or concerns regarding the project and to minimize potentially costly mistakes. The permit document will let you know the required inspections needed for your project. A two-day notice is needed when requesting these inspections.

FINAL APPROVAL

The Department will provide documentation when construction is complete and code compliance is determined. You will then have the personal satisfaction of a job done right. Enjoy your new surroundings with the peace of mind and the knowledge that they meet the safety standards in our community.

It takes everyone in a community to keep our homes, schools, offices, stores, and other buildings safe for public use. Your safe construction practices help protect you, your family, your friends, and your investment. Be sure to get your local code official involved with your project, because the Department of Licenses and Inspections is an important ally, from start to finish.

Excavation Safety Advisory

While the increased construction activity in the City of Philadelphia is welcomed and encouraged, the age and condition of adjoining buildings necessitates that an abundance of caution be observed when performing excavations in the City. Occasionally buildings collapse due to builders digging basements and footings too close to existing buildings. As you may be aware, many older buildings in Philadelphia are supported on rubble stone foundation walls with minimal or no spread footings below. Once these rubble stone walls are exposed or undermined they become unstable and are prone to sudden catastrophic failure.

Please remember that the Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code includes the following sections:

B-1803.1 – Excavations for any purpose shall not remove lateral support from any footing or foundation without first underpinning or protecting the footing or foundation against settlement or lateral translation.

B-3306.9 – Protection must be provided for footings, foundations and party walls. The person causing an excavation to be made shall provide written notice to the owners of adjoining buildings advising them that the excavation is to be made. Said notification shall be delivered not less than 10 days prior to the scheduled starting date of the excavation.

Protection of adjoining properties and underpinning must be designed by an engineer and be detailed on the approved building plans. A structural engineer must inspect all underpinning during its installation and issue an inspection report to the Department upon completion.

Failure to comply with the Philadelphia Building Code is a violation of the law. Should you cause property damage or human injury you will be subjected to the loss of your license and criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.



BUILDING SAFETY WEEK NEWSLETTER

L&I Creates International Code Council Chapter

John U. Young

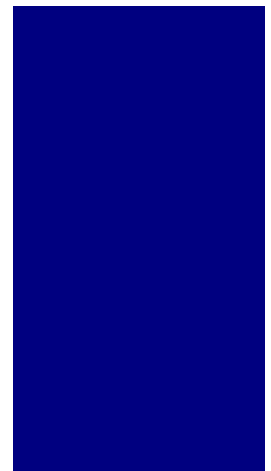
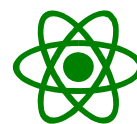
Over the last few months the Department of Licenses and Inspections has been working to develop and incorporate a Professional Chapter of the International Code Council (ICC). The ICC is a professional organization dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, and works to create and implement the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Known as the "Liberty Chapter", this ICC chapter came together with the hard work and vision of L&I employees.

With the creation of the Liberty Chapter, the Department of Licenses and Inspections is taking a major step toward fostering an increasing level of education and understanding of codes and the wide variety of challenges associated with building and public safety. Additionally, the Liberty Chapter will allow the department to hold training and education seminars that will provide us with continuing education credits required for maintaining state and national certifications.

In addition to the educational benefits associated with this chapter, it will serve to increase our own professionalism and will foster professional networking opportunities between build-

ing safety officials and individuals working in the design and construction communities. The Liberty Chapter will foster a professional network that can be called upon to discuss issues, formulate solutions, conduct public training seminars and maintain consistency in interpretation and application of the codes.

Ultimately, an ICC chapter will help achieve many of the goals recently articulated by Mayor Nutter in his Strategic Plan, focused on improving customer service, professionalism, and creating a high performing government. Through the increased professionalism facilitated through the development of an ICC Chapter, the Department of Licenses and Inspections will be able to serve the public better and work even more closely with the design and construction communities to ensure public safety and wellbeing.



BUILDING SAFETY WEEK NEWSLETTER

Homeowner Assistance Program for Residential Construction Projects

In recognition of Building Safety Week (May 5th-11th) and in-line with Mayor Nutter's commitment to service, the Department of Licenses and Inspections is unveiling a new Homeowner Assistance Program for residential construction projects.

This program is designed to foster communication and interaction between the public and L&I building plan reviewers to ensure safe construction projects. Homeowners looking to improve their properties can meet face to face with nationally certified plan reviewers, who will provide assistance and advice on building plans and permits, as well as construction code requirements.

This Homeowner Assistance Program will be in operation every Saturday starting May 10th, and run through the month of June. Homeowners and their contractors can meet with our staff in our Eastern District Office, located at Rising Sun Ave. & Benner St. All appointments will be scheduled via phone.

To schedule an appointment, please call (215) 686-2436. We look forward to helping you complete a safe construction project.



BUILDING SAFETY WEEK NEWSLETTER

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

L&I will begin enforcement of the requirements on September 15, 2008.

- ◆ Applies to all R-3 and R-4 Occupancies (one and two family dwellings, family child day care homes, and residential care homes for up to 16 people).
- ◆ CO Detectors detect the presence of carbon monoxide which is odorless, colorless and tasteless.
- ◆ Carbon Monoxide is a gas that is produced from the burning of fossil fuels in the combustion process to operate the appliance or equipment. Commonly found in homes that have natural gas or fuel oil heating or cooking equipment, as well as charcoal grills. Also is produced by automobiles in spaces that are not properly ventilated such as enclosed garages.
- ◆ New provision requires at least one CO detector within 15 feet of the entrance to each enclosed bedroom or within 15 feet of a bed in a sleeping area that is not enclosed. Generally one CO detector will be required in the hallway that contains bedrooms if the detector can centrally located within 15 feet of each bedroom. If this is not possible then additional detectors will be required.
- ◆ The CO detector installed in an existing occupancy can be battery powered or plug-in types powered by the building's electricity. Where multiple detectors are installed, they do not have to be interconnected.
- ◆ The CO detector installed in new construction or places requiring a certificate of occupancy shall be hard wired and fed from an unswitched portion of a branch circuit. Also, where multiple detectors are required, they have to be interconnected so that all will sound if one is activated.
- ◆ The CO detector is required to be installed in addition to other detectors that already are required by the Philadelphia Code.
- ◆ The ordinance provides that in lieu of having separate smoke and CO detectors, the owner can install a combination detector.
- ◆ The owner is required to post a notice in the common area of the building informing the tenants that the owner is required by law to supply and install CO detectors in the building. The owner is required to provide the manufacturer's instructions to at least one tenant on the premises.
- ◆ The building owner is required to supply and install the detectors. The tenant is required to periodically test and replace batteries in dwelling or rooming units
- ◆ The building owner has 30 days to replace CO detectors after receiving notice that detector is damaged or missing. Owners also are required to replace detectors that have an expiration date indicated by the manufacturer.

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ReadyNotifyPA – Find Out First!



Emergencies. Severe weather. Threats to homeland security. When situations arise in Southeastern Pennsylvania that may affect you and your family, ReadyNotifyPA lets local officials notify you quickly. Be among the first to find out and stay informed during an emergency.

ReadyNotifyPA can send you an E-mail, or send a text message to your cell phone or other device. You let ReadyNotifyPA know how you'd like to be notified. Alerts are free; however, your cellular provider may charge for text messaging.

Receiving text messages is easy and not just for kids. All subscribers will get emergency alerts. You may also choose to get other alerts, such as severe weather, transportation delays and crime alerts if offered by your county.

You choose the Southeastern Pennsylvania county or counties -- Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia -- that will send you alerts. Pick the county or counties where you spend most of your time -- it can be where you live, work or play.

ReadyNotifyPA is a Ready Region service provided by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force and the emergency management coordinators of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force was formed in 1998 in response to a growing awareness of the threat of terrorism. In recent years, its focus has broadened to include all hazards such as natural disasters. The Task Force works to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from catastrophic disasters.

Sign Up at www.ReadyNotifyPA.org

Sign up today, so you can find out first!



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BUILDING SAFETY WEEK NEWSLETTER

Philadelphia Building and Fire Codes Available

In Electronic Format - Submitted by Jack Markov

There's bacon and eggs, Fred and Ginger, Ryan Howard and home runs. Some things just belong together - like model code text and local changes. For codes with a lot of local modification, you should not have to go one place for the model text and another for local changes. Now, for the 2007 Philadelphia Building and Fire Codes, complete codes can be purchased from the International Code Council (ICC). These electronic publications merge Philadelphia ordinances and regulations with ICC model code text for a seamless read all in one place. Available in PC and MAC versions, each includes a search capability to easily locate mentions of an item throughout the code.

The cost is:

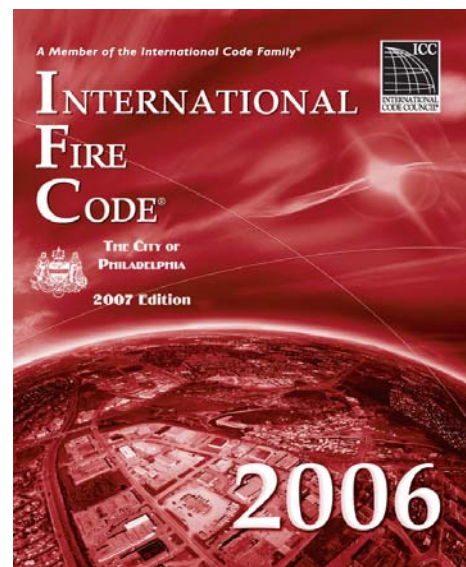
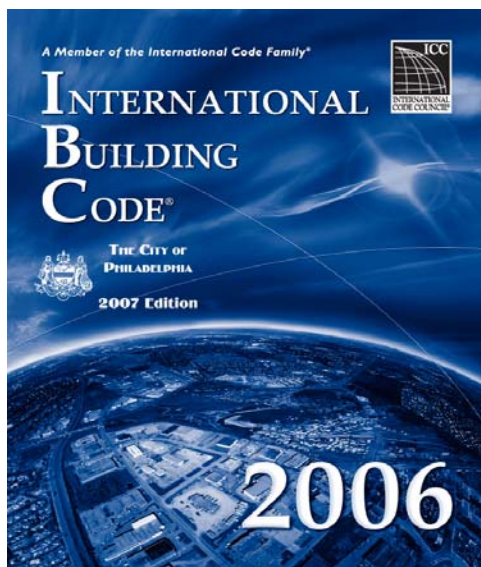
Building - \$119.00 (ICC non-member) and \$95.00 (ICC member)

Fire - \$98.00 (ICC non-member) and \$78.00 (ICC member).

For further information or to purchase, go to <http://www.ecodes.biz> and click on the "City Codes and Amendments" block, or, you can call the ICC at 800-786-4452.

For other ICC model codes adopted by the City of Philadelphia (Electrical – Administrative Provisions, Energy Conservation, Existing Building, Fuel Gas, Mechanical, Performance, and Residential) local modifications only continue to be available at the Department of Licenses and Inspections' web site (www.phila.gov/li) under Codes and Regulations.

The Philadelphia Administrative, Plumbing, and Property Maintenance codes are owned by the City of Philadelphia. They are available in their entirety, along with the regulations adopted under them, at www.phila.gov/li under Codes and Regulations.



**City of Philadelphia
Department of
Licenses and
Inspections**

Municipal Services
Building
1401 J.F.K. Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

www.phila.gov/li

"...Department works to ensure the safety of the structures in which all of us live, work, attend school, worship and play. We work daily to ensure safety in the built environment..."

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SAFETY
WEEK
NEWSLETTER**

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MAY 2008

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) is to administer and enforce the City's code requirements for the enhancement of public safety, including building, fire, housing, business, and zoning regulations. The Department is responsible for regulating the conduct of businesses and persons by issuing licenses, by conducting inspections, and by enforcing applicable codes and regulations.

In addition, the Department is empowered to take lawful actions necessary to correct dangerous and unlawful conditions, including making necessary emergency repairs to properties, cleaning and sealing abandoned buildings, and demolishing vacant buildings that pose a threat to public safety. In support of its larger mission, the Department seeks to generate revenue sufficient to cover the cost of its activities through the sale of permits and licenses and by the collection of costs expended for demolition and clean and seal actions.



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