

The New Jersey State Uniform Construction Code

What It Is

The New Jersey State Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Act, which was signed into law in 1975, authorizes the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs to adopt and enforce rules pertaining to construction codes and provides for the administration and enforcement of those rules throughout the State. The Uniform Construction Code (N.J.A.C. 5:23), which was promulgated in 1977, contains the UCC Act and all rules issued under the Act relating to the administration and enforcement of construction regulations.

The UCC is comprised of four basic technical subcodes for construction: building, electrical, fire protection, and plumbing. In addition, the UCC contains technical subcodes for fuel gas installations; mechanical installations; one- and two-family dwellings; accessible (barrier free) construction; the rehabilitation of existing buildings; the construction of manufactured homes; asbestos hazard abatement; radon hazard abatement; and playground safety.

In short, the UCC is a complete set of technical standards for construction with a uniform method of administration and enforcement.

How It Works

For each technical subcode of the UCC, the Department adopts by reference national model construction codes, which, in turn, contain references to national performance technical standards used in construction. The technical standards contain more detailed specifications for a particular aspect of construction. The national model codes incorporate by reference standards that are appropriate to their subject. For example, the adopted building subcode for New Jersey is the 2018 edition of the International Building Code (IBC/2018), which references technical standards that are developed and published by such organizations as the American National Standards Institute, the American Society of Testing and Materials, and the National Fire Protection Association and that apply to accessibility, heating and ventilation, and fire sprinkler requirements.

The UCC provides one stop service at the local level. A construction permit is required for a construction project. This permit includes technical subcode applications for building, electrical, fire protection, mechanical, or plumbing work.

A construction permit is required for any new construction as well as for work on existing buildings, including structural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work. There are some exceptions to the general permit requirement. For example, construction permits are not required for ordinary maintenance, which includes routine repair.

Property owners or contractors are responsible for obtaining construction permits and for submitting any required fees. The State adopts a fee schedule that applies to work performed by the State. Municipalities adopt their own fee schedules by ordinance.

Information about fee schedules for an individual municipality may be obtained from that local enforcing agency.

Applications for construction permits are submitted to local enforcing agencies. Under the UCC, local enforcing agencies are required to act on construction permit applications, including building plans and specifications, within specific timeframes. Not later than 20 business days after the submission of a complete application, the permit application must be released or denied.

Construction work may begin when the construction permit is issued. If plans and specifications have been submitted with the construction permit application, the plans and specifications must be approved before the commencement of work. Plans and specifications are required for new construction and for work in existing buildings.

During construction, the code official or inspector conducts regular inspections to ensure that the work performed complies with the UCC. The permit applicant is responsible for notifying the local enforcing agency that the project is ready for inspection. The inspection must be performed within three days of the notification.

As the construction project approaches completion, the permit applicant notifies the local enforcing agency that it is ready for the final inspections. At this time, the permit applicant also applies for a Certificate of Occupancy. When the project has passed the final inspections and it has been determined that the project complies with the UCC, that all required fees have been paid, and that the conditions of any prior approvals have been met, the construction official issues a Certificate of Occupancy. A Certificate of Occupancy verifies that the construction work authorized by the construction permit has been completed in accordance with the UCC.

Who Enforces It

In New Jersey, State-licensed, municipally employed code enforcement professionals--construction officials, subcode officials, and inspectors--are responsible for the enforcement of the UCC. A construction official is a State-licensed code enforcement official who is responsible for administering the UCC within the jurisdiction of the enforcing agency. Construction officials oversee subcode officials and inspectors, but a construction official cannot overrule a subcode official on a technical issue in a field in which the construction official does not hold a license. A subcode official is a State-licensed code enforcement official who implements the provisions of a specific technical subcode of the UCC and oversees the technical and administrative provisions of that subcode. Inspectors are State-licensed code enforcement officials who enforce the requirements of a specific technical subcode, but do not oversee the administrative provisions of that subcode.

The primary responsibility of code enforcement professionals is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of New Jersey's citizens. To accomplish this, construction officials and subcode officials review construction permit applications to ensure that building

plans and specifications conform to the UCC and inspectors perform field inspections for construction projects to ensure that the construction is in accordance with the UCC.

In certain instances, the State has responsibility for code enforcement. In such cases, the State performs the plan review while the local enforcing agency retains the responsibility for performing the field inspections. The UCC specifies which projects require the involvement of the State. These include casinos, hospitals, and State-owned buildings.

If you have questions about the Uniform Construction Code and how it works, please see the two-part General Information guidance that follows. In addition, you may contact the Code Assistance Unit at (609) 984-7609.

BUILDING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS



State of New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs
Division of Codes and Standards

GENERAL INFORMATION

BASIS OF BUILDING REGULATION

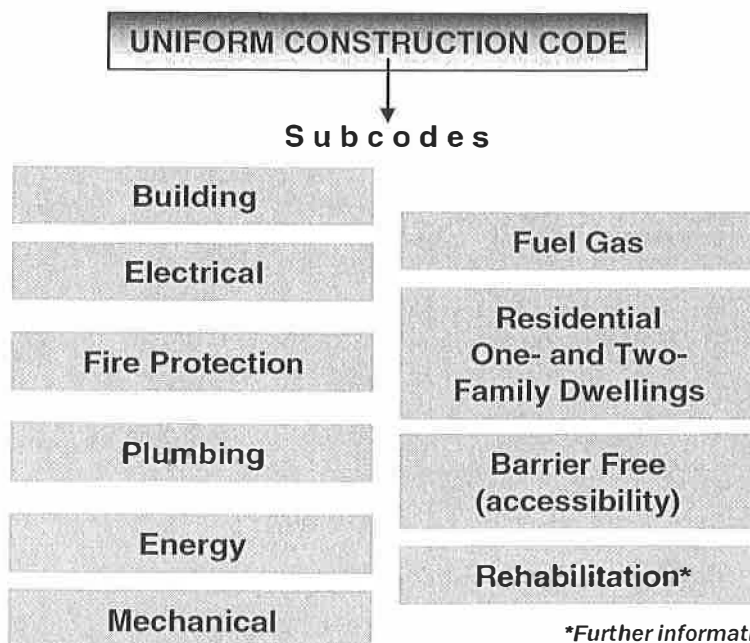
New Jersey's construction codes and standards grew out of two important public purposes:

- To safeguard the public's health, welfare and life safety in buildings; and
- To ensure that construction is affordable and promotes the growth of the State economy

Consistent model codes and standards have helped make construction more affordable by enabling building product manufacturers to standardize their products around a common set of laws, codes and standards.

The construction codes and standards govern:

- Fire Protection
- Structural Loads
- Accessibility
- Elevators
- Electrical
- Mechanical and Plumbing Systems
- Energy Conservation
- Protection against Wind, Seismic and Flood Events



The Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is a complete set of technical standards for construction with a uniform method of administration and enforcement in order to protect the public's health, safety and welfare.

The UCC establishes clear and predictable requirements for construction throughout New Jersey. There are no separate, local requirements.

The UCC contains the rules relating to the construction, repair, renovation, alteration, rehabilitation, maintenance, occupancy and use of buildings and structures.

**Further information can be found at www.nj.gov/dca/codes/offices/rehab.html.*

Did you know?...Permit applications and related forms, rule adoptions and proposals, code official licensing information, consumer information and programs, and much more useful information is on our website at www.nj.gov/dca/codes.



PERMITS

Before undertaking the construction or alteration of any building or structure, the owner or his agent (who may be the engineer, architect or contractor) is responsible for obtaining the construction permits from the local code enforcement agency.

A construction permit is required for:

- Any new construction
- Work on existing buildings including structural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work
- The enlargement, repair, renovation, alteration, reconstruction or demolition of a structure

Note: Construction permits are not required for ordinary maintenance, which includes routine repairs.

Required fees must be submitted with the permit application. Municipalities adopt their own fee schedules by ordinance. Information about fee schedules for an individual municipality may be obtained from that local enforcing agency.

Suspension of Permit

Any permit that has been issued will be invalidated if the authorized work has not started within 12 months after issuance of the permit or if the work is suspended or abandoned for a period of six months after it was begun.

Applying for Construction Permits

Under the UCC, local enforcing agencies process construction permit applications, including plans and specifications.

The application for a permit is submitted on the standard Code Permit Application form.* The application requires a general description of the proposed work, its location, the use and occupancy of all parts of the building or structure, portions of the site or lot not covered by the building or structure, and additional information as required by the construction official.

The local enforcing agency must release or deny the application not later than 20 business days after the submission of a complete application. Plans and specifications are required for new construction and for work in existing buildings. If plans and specifications have been submitted with the construction permit application, the plans and specifications must be released before the commencement of work. Construction may begin once plans are released and the permit is issued.

Application for a permit is made by the owner or his agent (who may be a licensed engineer or architect, or a plumbing, electrical or other contractor employed in connection with the proposed work).

All issued permits are the property of the owner.

*The application for a permit is submitted on the standard Construction Permit Application Form, which is available at: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/codes/resources/constructionpermitforms.html>.

Did you know?... New Jersey has an award-winning rehabilitation subcode to encourage work in existing buildings that was a "first of its kind" in the country.



INSPECTIONS

Inspections during Construction

Periodic inspections are conducted by the Construction Official and appropriate Subcode Officials as the project progresses to ensure that the work inspected conforms to the New Jersey's Uniform Construction Code. These inspections include:

General Inspections

Inspections for all subcodes of construction, other than one- and two-family dwellings, shall be limited to those required for one- and two-family dwellings and the following:

- Fire suppression systems;
- Heat producing devices;
- Special inspections required by any subcode of the regulations;
- A mid-point inspection for Barrier Free compliance of all buildings required to be accessible.
- Additional inspections:
 - Additional requirements, as permitted by the code and required by the municipality, shall be of the type and nature that construction may continue without interruption;
 - Where buildings proposed for construction exceed two stories in height or which pose complex or unusual inspection problems, the Construction Official or appropriate Subcode Official may specify additional inspections in writing to the applicant;
- The fire protection official periodically inspects all existing buildings and structures.

One- and Two-Family Dwellings

Construction must stop until the following inspections are made:

- The bottom of footing trenches, before placement of footings;
- Foundations and all walls up to grade level prior to covering or back filling;
- Utility services, including septic;
- Midpoint inspections for the following:
 - Building Subcode: All structural framing, connections, wall and roof sheathing, and insulation;
 - Electrical Subcode: Rough wiring, panel and service installation;
 - Plumbing Subcode: Rough piping.

Notice for Inspection

The person responsible for the construction work is responsible for notifying the enforcing agency when the work is ready for any required inspections. This notice must be given at least 24 hours prior to the time the inspection is desired. Inspections should be performed within three (3) business days of the request.

Final Inspections

Final inspections are required when the building or structure is finished and before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

The final inspection includes:

- Building and Fire Subcodes: Inspection of the installation of all interior and exterior finish materials, the sealing of exterior joints, mechanical systems and any other required equipment;
- Electrical Subcodes: Inspection of the wiring, devices and fixtures;
- Plumbing: Inspection of piping, trim and fixtures;
- Barrier Free Subcode: A review for compliance for all buildings required to be accessible.

Any violations of the Uniform Construction Code are noted and the holder of the permit is notified of any discrepancies by the construction official.

Did you know...In New Jersey, construction plan review is integrated in one place – there are no separate reviews for building and fire as is the case in many jurisdictions?



CERTIFICATES

Projects Requiring a Certificate:

- New Buildings
- Renovated or Altered Buildings
- Extended Buildings
- Reconstructed Buildings

Types of Certificates:

Certificate of Occupancy

When the construction project approaches completion, the permit applicant notifies the local enforcing agency that it is ready for the final inspection. Once the project has passed the final inspection, the official issues a Certificate of Occupancy. This verifies that the construction work authorized by the construction permit has been completed in accordance with the UCC.

Temporary Certificate of Occupancy

When the work covered by the permit has been substantially completed and the building may be occupied safely. A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy can be issued by the construction official after a written request is submitted.

Certificate of Approval

A Certificate of Approval is issued for all work that requires a construction permit but which does not require a Certificate of Occupancy.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

In New Jersey, the following municipally employed, State-licensed code enforcement professionals are responsible for the enforcement of the UCC:

- The Construction Official is responsible for administering the UCC within the jurisdiction of the enforcing agency. Construction officials oversee subcode officials and inspectors but cannot overrule a subcode official on a technical issue in a field in which the construction official does not hold a license.
- The Subcode Official implements the provisions of a specific technical subcode of the UCC and oversees the technical and administrative provisions of that subcode.
- Inspectors enforce the requirements of a specific technical subcode, but do not oversee the administrative provisions of that subcode.

The primary responsibility of code enforcement professionals is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of New Jersey's citizens with regard to building construction. To accomplish this, the Construction Official and Subcode Officials review the construction permit applications to ensure that building plans and specifications conform to the UCC. The inspectors perform field inspections of the construction project to ensure the construction is in compliance with the UCC.

In certain instances, the State has responsibility for code enforcement. In such cases, the State performs the plan review while the local agency retains the responsibility for performing the field inspections. The UCC specifies which projects require the involvement of the State. These include casinos, hospitals, and State-owned buildings.

New Jersey has an Office of Regulatory Affairs charged with the oversight of local enforcement of the State's Uniform Construction Code. The Office of Regulatory Affairs accepts and acts on complaints about local officials.

Questions regarding specific projects should be directed to the local construction official, general inquiries regarding the Uniform Construction Code and Subcodes can be directed to:

State of New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs.
Division of Codes and Standards
P.O. Box 802
Trenton, N.J. 08625-0802
609/984-7609

May, 2006



BUILDING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

General Information

**State of New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs
Division of Codes and Standards
www.nj.gov/dca/codes
PO Box 802
Trenton, NJ 08625-0802**

August 2005



BASES OF BUILDING REGULATION

New Jersey's construction codes and standards grew out of two important public purposes:

- To safeguard the public's health, welfare and life safety in buildings; and
- To assure that construction is affordable and promotes the growth of the State economy.

Consistent model codes and standards have helped make construction more affordable by enabling building product manufacturers to standardize their products around a common set of laws, codes and standards.

The Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is a complete set of technical standards for construction with a uniform method of administration and enforcement in order to protect the public's health, safety and welfare.

The **UCC** contains the rules relating to the construction, alteration, renovation, rehabilitation, maintenance, occupancy and use of buildings and structures.

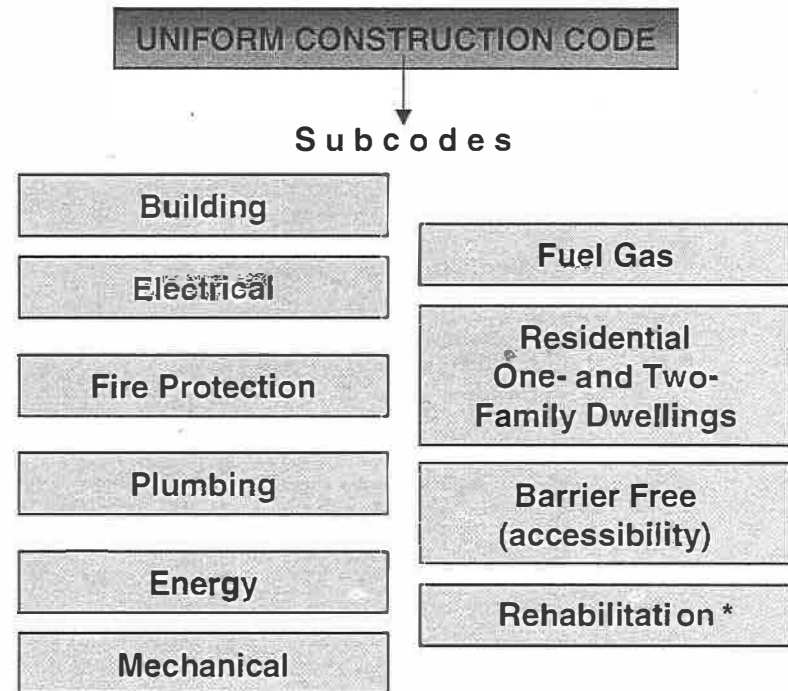
The construction codes and standards include codes governing:

- **Fire Protection**
- **Structural Loads**
- **Accessibility**
- **Elevators**
- **Electrical,**
- **Mechanical and Plumbing Systems**
- **Energy Conservation**
- **Protection against Wind, Seismic and Flood Events**

LICENSING OF CODE ENFORCEMENT PROFESSIONALS

- The Code is composed of technical subcodes. The Subcode Officials are responsible for their areas of technical expertise, and they each work under the direction of the Construction Official.
- The Construction Official is responsible for ensuring the coordinated operation of the enforcement agency.
- Every Construction Official, Subcode Official and Inspector is required to be licensed by the Division of Codes and Standards.

**Further information regarding the Rehabilitation Subcode can be found at www.nj.gov/dca/codes/offices/rehab.html.*



PERMITS

A construction permit is required for any new construction as well as for work on **existing buildings including structural, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical work.**

Before construction or alteration of any building or structure, the owner, the contractor or his agent, engineer or architect, is responsible for obtaining the construction permits.

Permits are required:

- **To construct, enlarge, repair, renovate, alter, reconstruct, or demolish a structure.**

Exceptions:

- **Ordinary maintenance, which includes routine repairs.**

Applications for Construction Permits

Under the UCC, local enforcing agencies are required to process construction permit applications including plans and specifications.

The application for a permit is submitted on the standard Code Permit Application form.*

The application requires a general description of the proposed work, its location, the use and occupancy of all parts of the building or structure, all portions of the site or lot not covered by the building or structure, and additional information as required by the construction official.

Not later than 20 business days after the submission of a complete application, the permit application must be approved or denied, by the local enforcing agency.

Application for a permit is made by the owner or his agent, a licensed engineer or architect, or a plumbing, electrical or other contractor employed in connection with the proposed work.

All issued permits should remain the property of the owner.

** The application for a permit is submitted on the standard Construction Permit Application Form, which is available at: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/codes/>.

Certificate of Occupancy

When the construction project approaches completion, the permit applicant notifies the local enforcing agency that it is ready for the **final inspection**.

Once the project has passed the final inspection, the official issues a **Certificate of Occupancy**. This verifies that the construction work authorized by the construction permit has been completed in accordance with the **UCC**.

Projects Requiring Certification:

- **New Buildings**
- **Renovated or Altered Buildings**
- **Reconstructed Buildings**
- **Extended Buildings**
- **Existing Buildings**

Temporary Certificate of Occupancy

When the work covered by the permit has been substantially completed, the building may be occupied safely. A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy can be issued by the construction official after a written request is submitted.

Suspension of Permit

Any permit issued will be invalidated if the authorized work is not commenced within 12 months after issuance of the permit or if the authorized work is suspended or abandoned for a period of six months after the time of commencing the work.

Inspections:

Preliminary Inspections

Before issuing a construction permit, the construction official reviews the submitted plans and application.

Inspections during Construction

Periodic inspections are conducted as the project progresses to ensure that the work inspected conforms to the New Jersey's construction code requirements.

One- and two-family dwellings: Projects for which construction must cease until the following inspections are made:

- The bottom of footing trenches, before placement of footings.
- Foundations and all walls up to grade level prior to covering or *back filling*.
- Utility services, including septic.

- Midpoint inspections:
 - Building Subcode: All structural framing, connections, wall and roof insulation.
 - Electrical Subcode: Rough wiring, panel and service installation,
 - Plumbing Subcode: Rough piping.

2. Inspections for **all construction subcodes: Fire suppression system, heat producing devices, any special inspections.**

- Midpoint inspection: The barrier free subcode.
- Additional inspections: These will depend on the type and nature of construction and what the municipality requires.
- Additional inspections: Construction of buildings which exceed two stories in height or which pose complex or unusual inspection problems.

Inspections

Notice for Inspection

The person responsible for the construction work is responsible for notifying the enforcing agency when the work is ready for any required inspections. This notice will be given at least 24 hours prior to the time the inspection is desired. Inspections should be performed within 3 business days of the request.

Periodic Inspections:

The fire protection official periodically inspects all existing buildings and structures.

Final Inspection:

When the building or structure is finished, and before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, a final inspection is required.

Any violations of the code will be noted and the holder of the permit will be notified of any discrepancies by the construction official.

The final inspection includes:

- Building and Fire: Inspection of the installation of all interior and exterior finish materials, the sealing of exterior joints, mechanical systems and any other required equipment,
- Electrical: Inspection of the wiring, devices and fixtures,
- Plumbing: Inspection of piping, trim and fixtures.