

CODE SOLUTION

PERMITTING

Electrical Permits for Public Service Agencies

Issue:

The Administrative Code exempts the following from electrical permit requirements:

"The installation of conductors or equipment for or by public utilities, common carriers or commercial radio or television stations that are under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or a federal regulatory body. This exemption applies only to conductors and equipment used directly in the conduct of the entity's business as a utility, common carrier or commercial radio or television station and that are located either outdoors or in a building or portion thereof used exclusively for the business function of such entity."

In 2006, PA Act 157 added the following to the UCC:

"A permit is not required for the installation, alteration or repair of generation, transmission, distribution, metering or other related equipment that is, by established right, under the ownership and control of public services agencies."

The addition of this language to the UCC (which cannot be amended at the local level) modifies the application of the Administrative Code for entities that are considered "public service agencies." However, a definition of the term was not added to the UCC.

What is considered a "public service agency"?

Solution:

Based upon consultation with the Law Department, the term "public service agency" should be defined as follows:

An entity lawfully authorized in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to provide noncompetitive services and rates to the public for the purpose of delivering electrical, water, sewer, telephone, or gas service; it includes any entity regulated as a utility by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC).

As an example, Comcast cable services are not regulated as a "public service agency" and therefore require electrical permits for installations in buildings. However, as of the date of this document, Verizon is regulated by the Commonwealth and therefore is exempt from electrical permits pursuant to the UCC as a "public service entity."



Code Sections:

Philadelphia Administrative Code
Section A-301.2.3

PA Uniform Construction Code
§ 7210.502. (a.1) EXCEPTIONS

Issued by:

Michael Fink, Chief Code Official

Date:

April 17, 2018

Disclaimer:

This interpretation, policy or code application is intended to provide guidance to staff for consistency of review and is subject to change without notice. Application of this interpretation, policy or code application to specific projects may vary. There may be other ways to comply with the Code. If so, you are not required to use this method. You may want to investigate other options, or consult with a professional identifying an equally code compliant solution.