

DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS CODE INTERPRETATION No. B-0401		CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA TITLE 4 — BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY CODE
SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION: TELEVISION AND RADIO ANTENNAS		REFERENCE CODE SECTION(S): A-301.1.1, A-301.2.1 and B-101.2
ISSUED BY		
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TITLE: Chief Code Official		PAGE 1 OF 1

ISSUE:

At what point does a television or radio antenna (conventional or dish) become a structure requiring a permit?

DISCUSSION:

The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and, therefore, the 2004 Philadelphia Building Code apply to the construction of “every building or structure”. The UCC defines a structure as “a combination of materials that are built or constructed with a permanent location or attached to something that has a permanent location”. In the case of television and radio antennas, applying this definition without qualification would require that the smallest antenna obtain a permit. This is not the intent of a code implemented, as the UCC was, in part to eliminate “needless requirements” that “lack benefits to the public”, “slow the process of construction and increase the costs of construction.” However, at some size an antenna does become a structure and as such is subject to these codes.

Private antennas for television or radio reception 12 feet or less in height and dish antennas two feet or less in diameter typically do not require special knowledge or skill to erect safely. Furthermore, the limited size and weight of such antennas and dish antennas do not require special structural design or support. Antennas and dish antennas exceeding these size restrictions require special structural design or support considerations, including wind or snow load. In consideration of this, it is reasonable to treat all antennas more than 12 feet in height and all dish antennas more than two feet diameter as structures. Finally, even small antennas can not be allowed to have a negative impact on structures that are regulated by the code.

DIRECTION:

Private antennas for television or radio reception 12 feet or less in height and dish antennas two feet or less in diameter do not require Building Permits.

A Building Permit is required to erect all antennas more than 12 feet in height or dish antennas more than two feet in diameter.

Regardless of the need for a permit, an antenna or dish antenna of any size shall not be erected so as injure the roof covering.

All connections to the roof structure must be properly flashed to maintain water tightness.

When an antenna is removed the roof covering shall be repaired to maintain weather and water tightness.