

CODE SOLUTION

PERMIT PROCESSING

Reissue of Lawful Occupancy Signs

Issue:

Per the 2013 Philadelphia Fire Code, every room or space that is an assembly occupancy shall have the occupant load of the room or space posted on a sign near the exit. Often Department inspectors find that such required signs have been removed and issue notice to the owner to replace them. If the owner has not retained a copy, a request is submitted to the Department for a replacement.

Can the review of such requests for a replacement of the sign for the room or space enforce other code provisions?

Solution:

Philadelphia has adopted its own Fire Code to apply to the prevention and protection from fire in existing buildings. Legally existing buildings fall outside the scope of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC). Therefore, Building Code (including accessibility), Plumbing Code (including fixture counts) and other code provisions enforced under the authority of the UCC may not be applied.

The reissuance of a Lawful Occupancy Sign is limited to a confirmation through department records that the existing building is legally occupied. Once the building is determined to be legally occupied, the department shall use the submitted plan(s) to calculate the occupant load based upon the Philadelphia Fire Code.

The Administrative Code provides that a structure which is legally in existence is permitted to continue without change unless the codes mandate such change.



Code Sections:

Philadelphia Fire Code (2013)
Section F-1004.2
Posting of Occupant Load

Administrative Code
Section A-102.6
Existing Structures

Issued by:

Michael Fink, Chief Code Official

Date:

December 13, 2017

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.