

FAQ:

Is a zoning permit required to add electric vehicle chargers (EVC) to an existing parking lot or garage?

Background:

With the growing popularity of electric vehicles, more property owners are seeking to add Electric Vehicle Chargers (EVC) to their existing parking lots or garages.

The parking of vehicles is considered either a primary or accessory use of a property. Per [A-301.1.5](#), a use registration permit is required for every new use commenced on any land or in any structure. In some cases, a use permit is not required for an accessory use (See the [Accessory Use FAQ](#) for more information).

In addition to the use of parking, the Zoning Code regulates parking space dimensions and accessibility. Typically, any changes to the configuration or type of parking spaces requires a new zoning permit to confirm compliance.

Answer:

A zoning permit is not required if the following conditions are satisfied:

- The EVC's are incidental to the existing parking on the lot,
- There is no increase or decrease to the number of parking spaces on the lot or garage,
- There are no changes to the size, angle or location of any parking spaces or aisles,
- No landscaping required by [14-705](#) or [14-803\(5\)](#) is removed, and
- The EVC equipment does not encroach into the required parking space, drive aisle or accessible access aisles.

All other installations shall require a zoning permit.

Additional Notes:

- Installation must be in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions and a separate [building permit](#) is required for Level 3 chargers.
- An [electrical permit](#) must be obtained for the installation of any EV chargers. If certain [conditions](#) are met, the electrical permit may be issued without plans.
- Signage associated with EVC's requires a zoning permit unless it is exempt per [14-903](#). Exemptions include but are not limited to:
 - The erection or placement of a directional sign required by state or federal law, subject to the requirements of § [14-904\(1\)\(c\)](#).
 - The erection or placement of any sign within a premises that is not located and designed to be viewed by members of the public outside the premises.
 - The placement of any video or digital display with a screen area of less than one sq. ft. on a permitted primary structure, accessory structure, or piece of equipment and designed to be viewed only by an individual obtaining services or goods at that location. This includes digital or video screens on fuel pumps, car washes, and air-filling stations.
- EVC's located within the public right of way are subject to additional regulations and require the approval of the Philadelphia Department of Streets and Philadelphia Art Commission.

Questions? Call 311 or (215) 686-8686 (if outside Philadelphia) or submit an online form via <http://www.phila.gov/li/get-help>.

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.