



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS

Construction Services Division
Municipal Services Building - Concourse Level
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

EZ PERMIT STANDARD

ALTERATIONS

For alterations to an Existing
One-Family Dwelling.

Revised 7/26 (IRC-2021)

EZ Permit Standard: Alterations

Obtain permits for alterations and renovations of an Existing One-Family Dwelling without submitting plans by meeting the Conditions and Limitations below. (Deviations will require submission of plans to the Department.)

Special Flood Hazard Area: If the subject property is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area (Floodplain), additional documentation may be required.

Conditions:

- The structure must be the primary occupancy of the owner of record. Proof of residency must be demonstrated through a PA or Municipal identification card. Non-owner-occupied buildings can obtain an EZ Permit with a licensed PA Engineer performing an inspection at the property. The Engineer should prepare a detailed report to include the full scope of work proposed, the location of work and report on the structural conditions of the structure.
- Any alteration to a dwelling unit within a duplex, multi-family, or mixed-use (i.e., both retail and residential) building, including condominiums, **shall not** be eligible.
- Work must fully comply with the requirements of the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC) and the 2021 International Existing Building Code (IEBC).
- EZ permit process **shall not** be applicable to buildings listed as historic as established by the Philadelphia Historical Commission without prior approval, contact the staff at preservation@phila.gov in the planning stages of your project.
- An existing building, existing means of egress and existing levels of protection **shall not** be altered such that the building becomes less safe than its existing condition.
- A minimum ceiling height of 7 ft. must be maintained for habitable rooms, which are any enclosed space used for living, sleeping, eating, or cooking.
- No new floor openings permitted. Stair reconstruction is only allowed in existing stair frame openings.
- Basement alterations are **PROHIBITED** unless the basement is an existing, habitable space with code compliant ceiling heights and means of egress. Photographs and a signed statement from the owner affirming compliance must be submitted with the permit application.
- Basement alterations **shall not** include the creation of sleeping units.
- Structural alteration or repair is expressly **PROHIBITED** under this permit. Prohibited structural work includes but is not limited to any modification to exterior walls, party wall, floor/roof framing and foundations, including underpinning, excavation, removal of foundation slab, or the alteration of any load-bearing component of the structure.

Work May Include:

- Demolition of drywall and plaster from existing walls and ceilings.
- Demolition of non-load bearing partitions.
- Stair reconstruction in an existing opening.
- Construction of non-load bearing partitions.
- Interior wall coverings or finishes, including masonry veneer.
- Subfloor sheathing atop existing joists.
- Finish flooring as per manufacturer's recommendations.
- Wood sheathing and/or gypsum board affixed to underside of existing ceiling joists.
- Replacement of doors and windows in their existing openings.
- Application of stucco or vinyl siding to exterior walls.
- Replacement of roof covering.
- Installation/alteration of ductwork and extension/alteration of fuel gas piping.



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Code and Construction Requirements:

Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- Interconnected smoke detectors shall be installed in the followings locations:
 - In each sleeping room or bedroom
 - Outside each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom
 - On each additional story of the dwelling, including basements
 - Not less than 3' horizontally from the door or opening of a bathroom
 - In the hallway(s)
 - In the room(s) open to the hallway serving bedrooms where the ceiling height of the room exceeds the ceiling height of the hallway by 24" or more
- Interconnected carbon monoxide (CO) alarms shall be installed in the following locations:
 - Outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom
 - Where a fuel-burning appliance is located within a bedroom or it's attached bathroom, a CO alarm shall be installed within that bedroom
- Combination smoke and CO alarms are permitted

Maintaining Minimum Area and Light

- Habitable rooms must have a minimum area of 70 sq. ft.
 - The minimum dimension in any horizontal direction is 7'
- Habitable rooms must have a minimum window area of 8% of the floor area
 - The window must have a minimum opening to the outdoors of 4% of the floor area
- All interior stairways shall be provided with means to illuminate the stairs, including any landings
 - Wall switches shall be located on each floor level to control the light source where the stairway has six or more risers

Insulation

- The following are the minimum R-values that must be met if the exterior wall cavity or roof cavity is exposed:
 - Ceiling – 49
 - Wood frame wall – 20
 - Floor - 19
 - Basement wall – 13

Stairs

- Stairways shall not be less than 36" in clear width at all points above the permitted handrail height and below the required headroom height, both measured vertically from the sloped plane adjoining the tread nosing
 - Handrail height must not be less than 34" or more than 38"
 - Headroom height must be at least 6'-8"
- A flight of stairs shall not have a vertical rise greater than 12'-7" between floor levels or landings
- The riser height shall not be more than 7-3/4"
 - The greatest riser height within any flight of stairs shall not exceed the smallest by more than 3/8"
- The tread depth shall not be less than 10"



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Walls

- Each townhouse unit shall be separated from other townhouse units by two 1-hour fire-resistance-rated wall assemblies
- Common walls shared by two townhouse units shall be constructed without plumbing or mechanical equipment, ducts or vents, other than water-filled sprinkler piping in the cavity of the common wall
- Framing for non-load bearing walls must be at least 2" nominal thickness with the following maximum laterally unsupported heights and spacing:
 - 2x4's – 14' height, 24" spacing
 - 2x6's – 20' height, 24" spacing
- 1x2 furring strips may be used over interior masonry walls or walls with solid backing
 - Maximum 24" spacing
- 5/8" thick type X gypsum wall board is recommended
 - Installed in perpendicular orientation to the framing
 - 6" maximum spacing for nails or screws
- Drywall joints shall be staggered and metal reinforcement shall be installed at all wall and ceiling angles

Floors

- Subflooring shall not be less than utility grade lumber, No.4 common grade boards, or wood structural panels
- Subflooring shall be perpendicular to the joist with the following thickness:
 - 5/8" when existing joist spacing is less than or equal to 16" O.C.
 - 11/16" when existing joist spacing is greater than 16" O.C. and less than or equal to 24" O.C.

Ceilings

- Habitable spaces, hallways, and portions of basements containing these spaces shall have a minimum ceiling height of 7'
- Wood sheathing shall be installed with No.8 screws, 12" O.C.
- Gypsum board shall be installed with No.6 screws 12" O.C.

Doors and Windows

- Must be installed within original openings
- Shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's written instructions
- Flashing shall be corrosion resistant applied shingle fashion in a manner to prevent entry of water into the wall cavity or penetration of water to the building structural framing components
 - Extend flashing to the surface of the exterior wall finish or to a water-resistive barrier for subsequent drainage
- Air sealing shall be installed around all window and door opening on the interior side of the rough opening gap

Application of Stucco or Vinyl Siding to Exterior Walls

Replacement of Roof Covering

Installation/Alteration of Ductwork and Extension/Alteration of Fuel Gas Piping

- Must follow requirements of published EZ Permit Standards that cover these work scopes.

AP# _____

Applicant's Signature _____