

## ***Uniform Construction Code***

### ***Frequently Asked Questions***

#### **What codes are included in the Uniform Construction Code?**

Standards in these Codes have been adopted as part of the UCC:

International Building Code, 2003 edition  
International Residential Code, 2003 edition  
ICC Electrical Code, 2003 edition  
International Existing Building Code, 2003 edition  
International Energy Conservation Code, 2003 edition  
International Fuel Gas Code, 2003 edition  
International Mechanical Code, 2003 edition  
International Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities, 2003 edition  
International Plumbing Code, 2003 edition  
International Urban-Wildlife Interface Code, 2003 edition  
International Fire Code, 2003 edition

These Codes periodically are updated. Updated editions probably will then be used.

#### **Where can I get copies of these codes?**

Copies can be ordered on-line from the International Code Council at [www.intlcode.org](http://www.intlcode.org)  
Publications can be ordered by phone by calling (800) 214-4321 (ICC's Chicago office)  
The Codes can be ordered in book format and also on CD-ROM

#### **Has the Township adopted any standards in addition to those in these Codes?**

Yes. Due to our weather conditions and concern that firefighters be able to access commercial, industrial and institutional buildings in the event of fire, these additional standards have been adopted:

- Design frost depth of 48" to the bottom of footing
- Roof snow load of 40 pounds per square foot
- Design wind load per values in Section 1609 of the International Building Code
- A Knox box outside main door of commercial and industrial buildings

#### **When will the Uniform Construction Code take effect?**

On June 29, 2004, Millcreek's Board of Supervisors will formally elect to enforce the UCC and adopt an ordinance implementing the UCC. This will take effect on July 6, 2004.

## **What structures won't be covered by the UCC?**

The following are excluded -

- New buildings or renovations to existing buildings for which application for a building permit has been made or a contract for design or construction has been signed prior to the effective date of the UCC;
- Utility and miscellaneous-use structures (not including swimming pools and spas) that are necessary to detached single-family dwellings, including carports, detached private garages, greenhouses and sheds having an area of less than 500 square feet;
- Agricultural buildings (but all habitable areas and agricultural product processing structures *are* covered by the UCC).

## **How will Millcreek enforce and administer the UCC?**

Millcreek Township has entered into a contract with Building Inspection Underwriter of Pennsylvania, Inc. (BIU) to provide plan review, building code official and related administrative and enforcement services. BIU generally will administer and enforce the UCC.

## **Will Millcreek's process be different than other municipalities'?**

Millcreek, Harborcreek and Fairview Townships have entered into what is called an inter-municipal agreement that provides for a uniform process of administration and enforcement in the three townships. All have retained BIU to provide administration and enforcement services. All are adopting identical or mostly identical regulations. BIU's fees for its review of plans and applications, issuance of permits, inspections, issuance of certificates of occupancy and other services will be the same in all three townships.

All three Townships will have Zoning Permits and similar rules for them. Regulations on zoning, development, stormwater management, etc. are somewhat different in each township - but to the extent they can, each is working to make their process similar to that in the others.

## **If I want to build a building or an addition, or a swimming pool, can I just get a UCC permit and get going?**

No. The Township regulates many of these activities on issues having little to do with how a building is built or electrical work is done. These local regulations, ranging from those in the Zoning Ordinance to those in the Subdivision and Land Development, Stormwater Management, Sidewalk, Sign and other ordinances, will be regulated through a Zoning Permit.

When a Zoning Permit is required, the Zoning Permit must be issued before you can even apply for a UCC construction permit. You will need to meet requirements of both the Zoning Permit and the UCC permit.

**Will there be fees for a Zoning Permit?**

Yes. The Township is adopting a fee schedule effective with the new UCC to address services under the new system. Regulation of zoning, development, stormwater management and other activities will continue and those whose activities require the services will pay fees for them.

**I applied for a building permit to beat the UCC's effective date. If I don't start or finish work on time, what will happen?**

Under the Zoning Ordinance prior to the UCC's effective date and under the UCC Ordinance beginning July 6, 2004, a building or construction permit requires that the applicant begin work within 6 months after the permit was issued and complete work within 12 months after the permit was issued.

The Board of Supervisors is aware that some obtained building permits in an effort to avoid regulations of the UCC. It is unlikely that the Supervisors will approve requests for extension of time under permits that were applied for before the applicant was ready to do work.

**How will the UCC affect alterations or additions to an existing structure?**

If there is no change in use of the structure, only the portions of the building that are being altered must meet the new UCC requirements for new structures.

**Are there fines for violating the UCC?**

Yes. Under the Township's Ordinance, the fine for violation is not to exceed \$1,000 for each violation and each day a violation continues. Violation of a stop-work or other enforcement notice involves a fine of not less than \$500 and not more than \$1,000.

**How will the construction plans and specifications reach BIU?**

When a Zoning Permit is required, that Zoning Permit must be issued before BIU will accept any application for a UCC permit or a plan.

BIU will have an inspector at the Township for at least 1 hour early on each regular work day. That inspector can answer questions in person if you want to stop in while he or she is there.

Construction plans and permit applications can be left for BIU at the Township's Zoning Office. They must be accompanied by full payment of the fee that is due under BIU's fee schedule. Permit applications, plans and specifications can also be delivered to BIU's Erie office or sent to BIU by mail, UPS or express delivery.

When a UCC permit is required but a Zoning Permit is not required, it usually will be best for you to contact BIU directly.

### **How long will it take for BIU to complete plan reviews and do inspections?**

Details as to the maximum time for plan reviews are stated in the Scope of Services of BIU's contract with the Township. That Scope of Services can be found on this site.

Generally, BIU has agreed to complete plan reviews much more quickly than the UCC Act requires. BIU will perform inspections within 1 business day after a request is received.

### **What happens if I do work without first applying for and getting a permit?**

You would be violating the UCC Ordinance and other ordinances requiring the zoning permit or other approvals. Fines for violation can be as high as \$1,000 for each day of violation. In any case, the late-filing fee is double the regular permit fee or \$100, whichever is greater.

### **What happens if I do not contact BIU for an inspection when I should?**

The failure to call for an inspection is no excuse. It often will be much more expensive to make repairs after the fact, or undo work so that an inspection is made after the fact. Failure to call for an inspection is a violation of the Ordinance and subjects the violators to fines. BIU likely would halt work until the violation is rectified.

The best way to get the job done quickly and without spending money needlessly is to get the permits that are required, adhere to the permits, call for inspections and meet all requirements so that a certificate of occupancy can be issued.

### **Are there other places where I can get information?**

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry ([www.dli.state.pa.us](http://www.dli.state.pa.us)) and BIU ([www.biupa.com](http://www.biupa.com)) both offer information on the UCC and how the process works. The Plan Review section of BIU's site offers helpful information on requirements for various plan reviews. BIU is setting up a larger local office at 4538 Peach Street.