

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: When and Why do I need a building permit?

The Jefferson Township Board of Supervisors voted to opt into the state wide Universal Construction Code with an effective date of July 8, 2004. All 2,566 municipalities across Pennsylvania had to decide to administer the code themselves or let the state do it. Jefferson Township chose to administer it themselves to insure quality inspections in a timely manner as well as keeping the cost reasonable. The code established uniform construction standards for most building projects and permits are required.

The purpose of a building permit used to be just for building set-back enforcement and tax assessment purposes. Under the new PA UCC, permits assure safe construction thus protecting public health, safety, and welfare. The permit process allows Code Officials to reduce the hazards of unsafe construction by insuring that minimum standards are being met and that appropriate materials are being used. **MOST** construction – large or small – requires a building permit in Jefferson Township. Contact the township office at 724-352-2324 to verify the need for a building permit for any project you are considering.

### Applications and Building Inspections during Construction

The information needed by the Permit Officer depends upon the type of building being constructed. The basic “types” are: single family dwelling; manufactured & industrialized housing; residential additions; detached structures (of 1000 sq. ft. or more which are accessory to a detached one family dwelling); decks/porches; swimming pools/spas/hot tubs; and commercial & multi-family. (*SOME detached structures less than 1,000 sq. ft. that are accessory to a single (one) family dwelling do not need inspections, but still need a building permit.*) In turn, the need for inspections and/or the number of inspections required during construction also depends upon the type of building/construction. For example, Single Family Dwelling construction will have 10 inspections: 1. Footing, 2. Foundation, 3. Plumbing (under slab), 4. Electrical, 5. Mechanical, 6. Plumbing, 7. Framing, 8. Energy conservation, 9. Wallboard and 10. Final Inspection. (It is requested that you or your builder combine 4,5,6, & 7 if possible.) Contact the township office at 724-352-2324 to obtain the appropriate building permit application. The same form is used for the “township review” certificate.

### Permits Benefit YOU Directly By:

- Guaranteeing that minimum construction standards are met
- Knowing that you are getting what you pay for from your contractor
- Increasing the longevity of your project
- Possible lower insurance rates
- Generally reduces damages to structures during natural disasters
- Eligibility for federal funding after a natural disaster
- Higher property values and easier to secure mortgages.

NOTE: When hiring a contractor, you should question their knowledge of the PA UCC and inform them that all work will have to be done in compliance with the construction code.

### Subdivision and Land Development

Jefferson Township has had regulations governing subdivision and land development within its borders for over 25 years, with subsequent revisions over the years. A subdivision is *basically* a division of land. A land development is *basically* any improvement to land or property (including but not limited to structures) other than a single family dwelling. Both Subdivision Plans and Land Development Plans must be prepared by a certified surveyor or engineer and must be presented to the Jefferson Township Planning Commission, the Butler County Planning Commission\*, and finally to the Jefferson Township Board of Supervisors for approval. (*\*Please note that the County of Butler adopted “review fees” effective this Jan. 2009.*)

Subdivision and Land Development, cont.:

These plans must be accompanied by either a Subdivision Application or Land Development Application, and in most cases sewage facilities modules, septic testing, storm water management proposals/studies, etc. must also accompany a plan before approval can be given. Instruction sheets and applications are available at the Township office at no charge. A copy of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations is available for purchase at the township office for a small fee.

Q: Where do I send for a municipal no lien letter and what is the cost?

Municipal lien letters are generally requested by your lender or your closing agent. The request should be made in writing with a \$10.00 check enclosed made out to Jefferson Township, 157 Great Belt Rd., Butler, PA 16002.

Q: Does the township require a dye test when a home is sold?

Although the township has no ordinance requiring a dye test upon sale of a home, it is recommended that one is done for your protection because it is a violation of the Sewage Facilities Act and Clean Stream Law to discharge partially treated sewage to the ground surface. Usually upon the sale of a home being financed the bank will require a dye test. Often a buyer will want a dye test on the home being purchased. Otherwise, upon complaint of a possible malfunction, the Township may require a dye test via the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer.

Q: How much property must I have to build on?

In newly proposed subdivisions, each lot must be 1.5 (one + one-half) acre or more if they are to be served by on-lot septic and wells. If the proposed subdivision can be served by public water & sewer (must be both) (via Saxonburg Authority), you may have lots as small as ½ (one-half) acre. There are still existing lots in the Township that are less than this. You can still build on these lots if you can meet the township set-backs and have sufficient room for your septic system.

Q: Is there a “burning ordinance” in the township?

According to the Dept. Of Environmental Protection (DEP) it is ILLEGAL for ANY business or industry to burn solid waste without a permit from the Department (DEP). DEP representatives have already approached several local businesses about illegal burning.

There is a “burning ordinance” in Jefferson Township for residences! The ordinance provides a list of burnable materials: “materials which are reducible to ashes by ordinary incineration, and is intended to include but is not limited to the following: paper, cartons, boxes, leaves, branches + limbs from trimmed trees.” Burning is allowed Monday through Saturday from 6 AM to 6 PM in a container (with some exceptions.) You are not to burn on Sundays or legal holidays. Social functions (i.e. weiner roasts) are allowed.

Q: What is the tax rate for Jefferson Township?

The township real estate tax rate in Jefferson Township was 1.33 mills, and had not been changed in over 25 years. In 2008, the County of Butler raised the assessment ratio from 75% to 100% of the 1969 values for the 2009 taxes. The Township in turn, reduced the 2009 real estate tax to 1-mill to accommodate the revised assessment ratio. The 08/09 school tax rate is 116.9 mills and the 09 county rate is 23.62 mills.

Q: What is the name of our school district?

Many people refer to our school district Knoch, but the actual name is South Butler County School District. It is made up of the Borough of Saxonburg, Clinton Township, Jefferson Township, Penn Township, and Winfield Township.

- Q: Where do I vote?  
There are two voting areas in Jefferson Township. If you reside north of Hannahstown Rd. and east of Saxonburg Road, you will vote at the municipal building at 157 Great Belt Rd. If you reside south of Hannahstown Road and west of Saxonburg Road, you will vote at the Jefferson Grange on Bullcreek Rd. just north of the intersection with West Jefferson Rd.
- Q: Where do I register to vote?  
If you need to register or change registration due to moving into the township, please call the County courthouse switchboard at 724-285-4731 and ask for the Election Bureau.
- Q: Do we have a dog control officer?  
The dog officer for Jefferson Township is Dennis Sybert (724-352-4732). If the answering machine comes on, be sure to leave both your name and phone number for a return call.
- Q: How do I report a road problem?  
Contact the Township Garage to report problems on township roads like fallen trees or potholes at 724-352-4740. Problems on state roads must be reported to PennDOT at (724-284-8800 or 1-800-FIX-ROAD). In Jefferson Township the state roads are: Dinnerbell Rd.; Freeport Rd./North Pike Road (which are Rt. 356); Rockdale Rd., Saxonburg Road, and Winfield Road.
- Q: Who collects the garbage in Jefferson Township?  
Currently, Vogel Disposal Service, Morrow Refuse, and Waste Management come into Jefferson Township. The home owner or resident is responsible to hire their own garbage collector.
- Q: Where do I get recycling bins?  
If your hauler does not have recycle bins available, the township “used to” have some available. They were provided to the Township by the County under a DEP Grant. The DEP is NO LONGER FUNDING these containers and the Township WILL NOT be buying them out-right! Please buy your own container(s) and label them “RECYCLING”.
- Q: Does Jefferson Township have weight limits on Township roads and must I obtain a permit for authorization to exceed the posted highway weight restrictions.  
Yes, the Township does have a “road weight limit study” and does require permitting and bonding before authorization can be given for exceeding the posted highway weight restrictions. Application forms are available on the website under “forms.”
- Q: Does the Township have an “open records policy”?  
Yes, the Township adopted an Open Records (Right-To-Know) Policy for Open (Public) Records in Dec. 2008 as required by the PA Office of Open Records and the PA Right-To-Know Law Act 3 of 2008. The Open Records (Right-To-Know) Request Form, the Jefferson Township Open Records Policy, the PA Office of Open Records Fees Structure and the Jefferson Township Fee Resolution are available on the website under “forms.”