

RULE PROPOSALS

INTERESTED PERSONS

Interested persons may submit comments, information or arguments concerning any of the rule proposals in this issue until the date indicated in the proposal. Submissions and any inquiries about submissions should be addressed to the agency officer specified for a particular proposal.

The required minimum period for comment concerning a proposal is 30 days. A proposing agency may extend the 30-day comment period to accommodate public hearings or to elicit greater public response to a proposed new rule or amendment. Most notices of proposal include a 60-day comment period, in order to qualify the notice for an exception to the rulemaking calendar requirements of N.J.S.A. 52:14B-3. An extended comment deadline will be noted in the heading of a proposal or appear in subsequent notice in the Register.

At the close of the period for comments, the proposing agency may thereafter adopt a proposal, without change, or with changes not in violation of the rulemaking procedures at N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.3. The adoption becomes effective upon publication in the Register of a notice of adoption, unless otherwise indicated in the adoption notice. Promulgation in the New Jersey Register establishes a new or amended rule as an official part of the New Jersey Administrative Code.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

(a)

DIVISION OF CODES AND STANDARDS

Uniform Construction Code

Proposed Amendments: N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15, 2.15A, 2.16, and 4.4

Authorized By: Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs.

Authority: N.J.S.A. 52:27D-124.

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

Proposal Number: PRN 2025-110.

Submit written comments by November 1, 2025, to:

Dominic Giova
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Fax No. (609) 984-6696
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The agency proposal follows:

Summary

The Department of Community Affairs (Department) proposes to amend Subchapters 2 and 4 of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) to recognize master hearth specialists, address internal inconsistencies within the single-family dwelling permitting process, incorporate an omitted provision from P.L. 2022, c. 139, and assign a number to the form submitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:23-4.4.

A section-by-section summary of the proposed changes follows:

1. At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15, Construction permits—application, multiple amendments are proposed to reference the master hearth specialist contractor requirements. These proposed amendments recognize that, in order to perform master hearth specialist work, the individual must be certified accordingly and provide their signature on plans for such work.

2. At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15A, Construction permit for single-family residence, proposed amendments address disconnects between plan submission requirements for general projects and single-family homes. This section in the UCC was originally addressed in a Formal Technical Opinion released in 1977. In the time since this was incorporated into the UCC, single-family residences have become more complex in design, and it benefits residents of the State to ensure that all relevant information is available on the plans so that all fixtures are UCC-compliant. The items proposed relate to electrical, plumbing, and mechanical submissions. Specifically:

- At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15A(a), a revision is made to terminology to properly reference single-family residences; there is no change in the applicability of this section.

- At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15A(b)3iii, proposed amendments require that electrical plans include floor and ceiling plans, lighting, receptacles, motors, and equipment, service entry location, line diagram and wire, and conduit and breaker sizes in addition to the details already required.

- At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15A(b)3iv, proposed amendments require that plumbing plans and specifications include floor plans, fixtures, pipe sizes, and other equipment and materials; riser diagrams with pipe sizes, fixture schedule, and sewage disposal, in addition to the details already required.

- At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15A(b)3v, proposed amendments require that mechanical plans and specifications include floor or ceiling plans; equipment, distribution location, size, and flow; gas riser diagrams with pipe sizes and input ratings; location of dampers and safeguards, and all materials, in addition to the details already required.

3. At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.16(j)4, the proposed amendment states that failure by the owner, agent, or other responsible person in charge of work to be present and prepared for a requested inspection shall constitute a failed inspection. This reflects requirements that were set forth through P.L. 2021, c. 139, that were inadvertently left out of the Department's initial rulemaking to implement the requirements set forth in that law.

4. At N.J.A.C. 5:23-4.4(d)1i, the name of the staffing analysis form to be submitted is updated to R 900. The contents of the form remain unchanged and are available on the Department's website at <https://www.nj.gov/dca/codes/offices/regaffairs.shtml>.

As the Department has provided a 60-day comment period on this notice of proposal, this notice is excepted from the rulemaking calendar requirements, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:30-3.3(a)5.

Social Impact

The Department anticipates that this rulemaking would have a positive social impact. The proposed amendments update the UCC to recognize master hearth specialists, reflect the increasingly complex nature of single-family construction, and ensure that all aspects of P.L. 2021, c. 139 are clearly implemented. Including master hearth specialists and updating the plan submission requirements for single-family homes ensures a greater level of safety and oversight for the related construction work, thereby ensuring a safe built environment for New Jersey residents.

Economic Impact

The Department does not anticipate that the proposed amendments would have any economic impact. The requirements for certification of master hearth specialists are already required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:16A-1 et seq. The details to be provided for plan submissions for single-family dwellings provide for further clarity and should eliminate existing delays in plan review where local enforcing agencies and design professionals have to have ongoing conversations to finalize plans. Providing these details upfront will streamline the process for single-family development. Finally, the changes to incorporate missed elements

from P.L. 2021, c. 139 and rename the related form ensure that the requirements, as set forth in the law, are clearly addressed within the UCC and will have no economic impact.

Federal Standards Statement

No Federal standards analysis is required because these proposed amendments are not being proposed pursuant to the authority of, or in order to implement, comply with, or participate in, any program established pursuant to Federal law or any State statute that incorporates or refers to any Federal law, standard, or requirement.

Jobs Impact

The proposed amendments are not expected to have any impact on the creation or loss of jobs, as the intention of the proposed amendments is to properly incorporate the master hearth specialist requirements and the requirements from P.L. 2021, c. 139, as well as recognize the increasingly complex nature of single-family dwellings.

Agriculture Industry Impact

The Department does not anticipate that the proposed amendments, which incorporate master hearth specialist requirements, clarify plan review, and properly reference sections from P.L. 2021, c. 139, would impact the agriculture industry.

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The proposed amendments update and clarify sections of the UCC related to master hearth specialists, single-family plans, and P.L. 2021, c. 139. This rulemaking ensures clarity and consistency in technical requirements for design, construction work, and inspections, some of which are small businesses, as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-16 et seq. However, the proposed amendments are not expected to introduce any new recordkeeping or reporting requirements on small businesses, nor are they expected to require small businesses to employ professional services not already required, in order to comply with the UCC.

Housing Affordability Impact Analysis

The proposed amendments, which incorporate master hearth specialist requirements, clarify plan review, and properly reference sections from P.L. 2021, c. 139, are not expected to have an impact on housing affordability or the average costs associated with housing in the State.

Smart Growth Development Impact Analysis

The proposed amendments update and clarify sections throughout the UCC to incorporate master hearth specialist requirements, clarify plan review, and properly reference sections of P.L. 2021, c. 139. As the proposed amendments do not impact zoning or what may be built in a given location, it is not anticipated that the proposed amendments will have any impact on housing production within Planning Areas 1 and 2, or within designated centers, pursuant to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Racial and Ethnic Community Criminal Justice and Public Safety Impact

The Department has evaluated this rulemaking and determined that it will not have an impact on pretrial detention, sentencing, probation, or parole policies concerning adults and juveniles in the State. Accordingly, no further analysis is required.

Full text of the proposal follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**; deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

SUBCHAPTER 2. ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT; PROCESS

5:23-2.15 Construction permits—application

(a) (No change.)

(b) In addition to the requirements at (a) above, the following information shall be required on any application for a construction permit when such information is available, but not later than the commencement of work.

1. (No change.)

2. The name and license number of the contractor(s) or subcontractor(s) for plumbing; electrical; [or] heating, ventilating, air

conditioning, and refrigeration; **or master hearth specialist** work, where such work is proposed.

i. Plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and refrigeration, **and master hearth specialist** work shall not be undertaken except by persons licensed to perform such work pursuant to law, except in the case of a single-family homeowner on his or her own dwelling.

ii. (No change.)

iii. The signature of the master hearth specialist contractor(s) shall be affixed to the corresponding subcode application form. An electronic signature is acceptable for electronic submissions for review purposes; provided that physical copies of plans at the worksite shall have a wet signature affixed, pursuant to the licensing law.

3.-12. (No change.)

(c) (No change.)

(d) Application for a permit shall be made by the owner, or his or her agent, a licensed engineer, architect, plumber, electrician, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration specialist, **master hearth specialist**, or other contractor employed in connection with the proposed work. If the application is by a person other than the owner, it shall be accompanied by an affidavit of the owner or the authorized person making the application, that the proposed work is authorized by the owner, and that the applicant is authorized to make such application. All issued permits shall remain the property of the owner, even if the application was made by a contractor or authorized agent.

(e)-(f) (No change.)

5:23-2.15A Construction permit for a single-family residence

(a) Any application for a construction permit for a [single family] **single-family** residence shall be made either electronically or by a physical submission. Physical submissions shall be accompanied by at least two copies of plans drawn to scale, with sufficient clarity and detailed dimensions to show the nature and character of the work to be performed. Electronic submissions shall comply with N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15B. Plans submitted shall not be required to show more detail or include more information than is reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Uniform Construction Code and rules in this chapter.

(b) Plans containing the following information shall be considered to meet the requirements at (a) above:

1.-2. (No change.)

3. The following details and submissions shall be required:

i.-ii. (No change.)

iii. Electrical [details indicating] **plans and specifications shall contain: floor and ceiling plans; lighting, receptacles, motors, and equipment; service entry location, line diagram, and wire, conduit, and breaker sizes. Details shall specifically indicate** lighting; receptacles; motors and equipment; smoke detectors; service entrance locations; size and type (overhead or underground); panel size, location; **and number of proposed circuits. A symbol legend shall be included.**

iv. Plumbing [details indicating] **plans and specifications shall contain: floor plans; fixtures, pipe sizes, and other equipment and materials; riser diagram(s) with pipe sizes, fixture schedule, and sewage disposal. Details shall specifically indicate** the locations of fixtures and a notice or table listing water and drainage pipe sizes. A note stating if sewage disposal is to public sewer or individual septic system shall be included.

v. Mechanical [details indicating] **plans and specifications shall contain: floor or ceiling plans; equipment, distribution location, size, and flow; gas riser diagram(s) with pipe sizes and input ratings; location of dampers and safeguards; and all materials. Details shall specifically indicate** the type of heating system; location, size and type of heating unit, noting the distribution method and indicating design rates, location of fire dampers and safeguards; and location, type, and size of flue.

vi. (No change.)

4.-7. (No change.)

5:23-2.16 Construction permits—procedure

(a)-(i) (No change.)

(j) Conditions of permit: The issuance of the construction permit shall be conditioned upon the following:

1.-3. (No change.)

4. That the owner, his or her agent, **responsible person in charge**, contractor, or other employees will assist the enforcing agency in its inspection work.[, if requested] **Failure by the owner, agent, or other responsible person in charge of work to be present and prepared for inspection shall constitute a failed inspection;**

5.-6. (No change.)

(k) (No change.)

SUBCHAPTER 4. Enforcing agencies; duties; powers; procedures

5:23-4.4 Municipal enforcing agencies—organization

(a)-(c) (No change.)

(d) The municipality shall ensure that the enforcing agency has adequate staff to review plans, applications, and specifications, and to schedule and perform inspections in a timely manner, or that supplemental arrangements are in place pursuant to (e) below.

1. On or before February 10 of each year, in a municipality that budgets according to the calendar year (January 1 through December 31), or on or before August 10 of each year, in a municipality that budgets according to the State fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), the construction official shall prepare and submit to the Director of the Division of Codes and Standards, a plan documenting the means the enforcing agency will use to meet the expected demand for service in the coming year in order to conduct the inspections to be performed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.17A and 2.18, as applicable, are conducted within the timeframes required by those sections.

i. The plan shall include an analysis of expected demand for all services including, but not limited to, review of open permits; development projects pending before the planning board; the historic demand for inspections for minor work, alterations, and additions; and the total number of staff hours necessary to perform the work. The plan is to [contain] **include** details by each code discipline and shall be provided on Form [F XX] **R 900**, established by the Department.

ii.-iii (No change.)

(e) (No change.)

LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

(a)

INCOME SECURITY

2026 Maximum Weekly Benefit Rates

2026 Taxable Wage Base Under the Unemployment Compensation Law

2026 Contribution Rate of Governmental Entities and Instrumentalities

2026 Base Week

2026 Alternative Earnings Test

Proposed Amendments: N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6

Authorized By: Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Authority: N.J.S.A. 34:1-5, 34:1-20, 34:1A-3.e, 43:21-3.c, 43:21-4.e, 43:21-7.b(3), 43:21-7.3.e, 43:21-19.t, 43:21-27, 43:21-40, and 43:21-41.

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to the calendar requirement.

Proposal Number: PRN 2025-113.

Submit written comments by November 1, 2025, to:

David Fish, Executive Director
Office of Legal and Regulatory Services

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
PO Box 110-13th Floor
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0110
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The agency proposal follows:

Summary

In accordance with the provisions of the Unemployment Compensation Law, N.J.S.A. 43:21-1 et seq., and the Temporary Disability Benefits Law, N.J.S.A. 43:21-25 et seq., which require the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Department) to annually establish and promulgate the maximum unemployment insurance, temporary disability insurance, and family leave insurance benefit rates, the contribution rate for governmental entities, the alternative earnings and base week amounts, and the taxable wage base, the Commissioner of the Department (Commissioner) is proposing amendments at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 to establish these rates and amounts for 2026.

The proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.2 establish the 2026 maximum weekly benefit rates for unemployment insurance benefits pursuant to the Unemployment Compensation Law and for State Plan temporary disability and family leave insurance benefits pursuant to the Temporary Disability Benefits Law. The maximum weekly benefit rates are \$905.00 for unemployment insurance and \$1,119 for temporary disability insurance and family leave insurance.

The proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.3 establish the 2026 taxable wage base for the purpose of contributions pursuant to the Unemployment Compensation Law, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 43:21-7.b(3), and the 2026 taxable wage base for the purpose of contributions to the State Disability Benefits Fund, including the Family Temporary Disability Leave Account, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 43:21-7.b(4). The new taxable wage base would be \$44,800 for contributions pursuant to the Unemployment Compensation Law and \$171,100 for contributions to the State Disability Benefits Fund, including the Family Temporary Disability Leave Account.

The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.4 reflects a decrease in the contribution rate for governmental entities and instrumentalities from 0.6 percent (of taxable wages) in 2025 to 0.5 percent in 2026. By way of background, N.J.S.A. 43:21-7.3 permits any governmental entity or instrumentality to elect the payment of contributions, as an alternative to financing benefits by payments in lieu of contributions. (In other words, government employers can choose to either reimburse the fund for unemployment compensation benefits paid on a dollar-for-dollar basis or make contributions at a rate set by the Department based on experience.) As to the contribution rate paid by those governmental entities that have elected to pay contributions, N.J.S.A. 43:21-7.3.e requires that the Commissioner review the composite benefit cost experience of all governmental entities and instrumentalities electing to pay contributions and, on the basis of that experience, establish the contribution rate for the next following calendar year that can be expected to yield sufficient revenue in combination with worker contributions to equal or exceed the projected costs for that calendar year. On the basis of the Department's calculation this year, it has been determined that a contribution rate for governmental entities and instrumentalities in 2026 of 0.5 percent of taxable wages should yield sufficient revenue in combination with worker contributions to equal or exceed the projected costs for 2026. Therefore, the Department is proposing that the contribution rate for governmental entities and instrumentalities be decreased from 0.6 percent of taxable wages to 0.5 percent of taxable wages.

The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.5 establishes the amount of earnings required in 2026 to establish a base week for an individual's claim for unemployment compensation and State Plan temporary disability and family leave insurance benefits, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 43:21-19.c(1) and t(3) and 43:21-27.h(4).

The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 12:15-1.6 establishes the amount of base year earnings required in 2026 to establish an individual's eligibility for unemployment compensation and State plan temporary disability and family leave insurance benefits in those instances when the