



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
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Governor

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Commissioner

To: Construction Officials

From: Edward M. Smith
Director

Date: August 25, 2015

Subject: Elevation of Single Family Homes-Prior Approval

Effective August 31, 2015, when plans are submitted for the elevation of a single family home, a letter from the utility company stating that the elevation will not result in violation of the safety clearances required by the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) will be a required prior approval.

Initiating the prior approval should avoid the difficulties that some homeowners have encountered when, after elevation, it is found that their home impinges on the clearances to high voltage wires required by the NESC.

The attached guidance summarizes the problem and explains the prior approval as the most reasonable and the most effective solution.

If you have any questions, please contact the Code Assistance Unit at (609) 984-7609.



ELEVATION OF SINGLE FAMILY HOMES NOTICE AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

It has come to the Department's attention that when some homes have been elevated to meet required base flood elevations, the elevated home has been constructed or re-constructed too close to high voltage electric power lines.¹ A hazardous condition results when a structure is constructed or reconstructed within the required safety clearance distances for structures near electric power lines.² When an elevated home has been constructed or re-constructed within these safe clearance distances, such condition constitutes a hazard that cannot be allowed to remain and, when it is found, it must be mitigated. Because this situation is largely avoidable, in many cases, the homeowner may be required to bear the cost of the necessary mitigation.

N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15(a)5 of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) requires that all state, local, and county prior approvals must be submitted to the local enforcing agency before a construction permit may be issued. The Department is hereby alerting all code users, including building owners, design professionals, and code enforcement officials that **a letter from the utility company, stating that the local utility has informed the applicant of the applicable required electrical safety area clearance distances so that the elevation for the applicant's home can be planned and constructed so as not to impinge on the required electrical safety area clearances**, is now a required prior approval for all homes being elevated to comply with applicable base flood elevations.

Code enforcement officials are also asked to report to the local electric utility company any observed conditions that would benefit from utility company evaluation. The code enforcement official is not asked to make a determination about the observed conditions, but is asked only to report conditions that the official thinks should be evaluated.

Contact information follows:

New Jersey Electric Utilities

JCP&L: To initiate service notification prior to issuance of building permit,

contact:

https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/fecorp/corporate/contact_us.html or

Telephone: (800) 662-3115

PSE&G: To initiate service notification prior to issuance of building permit, contact:

https://www.pseg.com/business/builders/new_service/before/index.jsp

Telephone: (800) 722-0256

¹ All electric power lines providing transmission or distribution services into residential communities qualify as high voltage electric power lines. Persons working in the vicinity of any electric power lines should always assume them to be energized and dangerous and should seek guidance from their local electric utility before proceeding or continuing any work in such area.

² The National Electrical Safety Code ("NESC") clearance distances ensure a safety zone around high voltage wires where structures must not be built or located. The required clearance distances take multiple factors into account, including the characteristics of the voltage on the wires and whether there are open or insulated conductors.

ACE: To initiate service notification prior to issuance of building permit, contact ACE local New Business office or call ACE Customer Service at 1-(800) 642-3780 or online at <https://www.atlanticcityelectric.com/forms/ace/other/contactus.aspx>

RECO: To initiate service notification prior to issuance of building permit, contact:
<http://www.oru.com/contactforms/customerassistance/index.html>

Telephone: (201) 236-6000

Department of Community Affairs

If there are any questions concerning code enforcement, please contact the Code Assistance Unit, Division of Codes and Standards, Department of Community Affairs at (609) 984-7609 or at codeassist@dca.nj.gov.