## **Utility Permits** in Pennsylvania

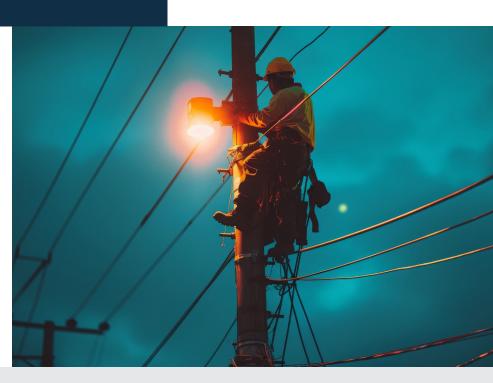
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#### Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

# Why are Utility Permits required in Pennsylvania?

The regulation governing the location and construction of utility facilities and other structures within the State highway Right-of-Way is critical to ensure the following:





### **Right-of-Way**

The Right-of-Way is the area which has been acquired by PennDOT for highway purposes. The Right-of-Way allows the public the "right of passage" along state owned roadways. The Right-of-Way can vary in width and generally extends beyond the edge of paved roads and shoulders. Permitted utility poles are generally located at the edge of the right-of-way.

#### **Utility Permits**

PennDOT has developed a checklist to assist utility companies, developers, or engineers in submitting applications for Highway Occupancy Permits (HOPs). To view the checklist, visit:

Applicant Checklist for Utility Highway Occupancy Permit.

For more information on permitting requirements and regulations, visit:

PennDOT Pub. 282: Highway Occupancy Permit Operations Manual and <u>Title 67, Chapter 459</u>.



### HOW DO I KNOW...If sidewalk or curb is along a state-owned roadway?

State-owned roadways are identified in the <u>Road</u> <u>Segment Inventory (RMSSEG)</u> which is a part of PennDOT's Roadway Management System (RMS).

#### WHEN...A permit IS needed?

- Placing of utility facilities or other structures, or opening of the surface within the state highway right-of-way.
- Any work performed on or across a limited access highway.

#### WHEN...A permit IS NOT needed?

- Modifying parts of existing permitted facilities (Ex. cable within a conduit, transformers on poles).
- Emergency utility repairs WITH an Emergency Permit Certificate or Card. <u>Title 67, Chapter 459.6</u>.
- Stringing of overhead utility lines on non-limited access highways.
- Accessing existing utility facilities through manholes in non-limited access.

#### **Utility Permit Application Procedure**

- Complete and submit the application via PennDOT's ePermitting System (EPS).
- The applicant on the permit must be the owner of the utility facility. A developer or property owner can be listed as a co-applicant.
- Include one complete set of detailed plans clearly indicating the following:
  - Location of surface opening
  - Horizontal and vertical dimensions of opening
  - Proposed utility installation and related highway features:
    - Center line
    - Edges of pavement
    - Outside edges of shoulder
    - Curbing
    - Guide rail
    - Highway drainage structures
    - Right-of-Way line
- Permit fees may be paid to the department by credit card, check, or money order, in the amount set forth in Title 67, Chapter 459.4. Applicants can participate in a monthly billing system rather than paying at time of permit issuance.

- Title 67, Chapter 459.4 provides guidance on fee exceptions
- Include a Traffic Control Plan established according to PennDOT PATA Figures: Pub. 213. Provide a project specific Traffic Control Plan if one of the following conditions are met:
  - Work is on a limited access highway
  - A travel lane will be closed during hours of darkness
  - It's necessary to completely close a highway to perform the work
- Submit the required documents listed above via PennDOT's ePermitting System (EPS) at least 30 days prior to the anticipated start of work.
- Utility Insurance: If a significant amount of work is being performed within the rght-ofway, the Department may require proof of insurance.
- Guidance to frequently asked utility permit questions can be found in PennDOT Publication 282, section 2.8.



### **Subsurface Utility Fast Facts**

- Subsurface utilities shall be placed outside the pavement or shoulder unless not feasible.
- Attaching a utility facility to a PennDOT-owned bridge requires a Bridge Occupancy License (BOL). A BOL application may be submitted via PennDOT's ePermitting System (EPS). An annual rental fee may apply.
- Subsurface utilities can be installed using one of three different methods:

Drilling, boring, or tunneling (2) Open trenching across highway

(3 Open trenching parallel to highway

- Each of these methods have specific requirements, refer to Title 67, Chapter 459.
- For a subsurface opening of not more than 500 linear feet, the Form M-949C can be used as an alternative to the applicant providing their own utility plan.



### **Aboveground Utility Fast Facts**

- New poles and other aboveground facilities must be placed outside the highway Clear Zone, as close to the right-of-way line as possible. The Clear Zone width varies based on traffic volumes and vehicle speeds, refer to <u>Pub. 282</u>.
- If new or replacement aboveground facilities cannot be placed adjacent to the right-of-way line, documentation to verify why the placement is not practicable must be provided.
- Aboveground Crossings:
  - The facility must be publicly or privately owned and serve the public.
  - The permittee must maintain its facility and keep it in good order and repair.
  - A damaged facility must be promptly removed, repaired, or otherwise made safe by the permittee.
  - The permittee must change or relocate its facility at its own cost and expense if it interferes with future highway alterations.
  - A permit will not be issued to install aboveground facilities at a location which PennDOT determines to have a high accident potential. The following criteria will be considered:
    - Are supporting structures placed outside the State highway right-of-way?
    - Are supporting structures protected from errant vehicles, and vice versa?
    - Are structures crossing the highway at least 18 feet above the pavement and shoulder?
    - Is the crossing structure designed to preclude any type of material from dropping onto vehicles, pedestrians, or the surface within the right-of-way?
- Refer to <u>Title 67, Chapter 459</u> for the full regulations relating to aboveground facilities.

# Instructions for Electronic Submission via PennDOT's ePermitting System (EPS)

- This application provides any utility company, developer, or engineer that needs to obtain a utility permit with an integrated site plan.
- Complete the required fields and click 'Save'. This will generate an application number and allow you to attach documents before submitting the application to PennDOT.
- Use the Attachments section to upload any documents associated with your application.
- Unless paying by credit card or participating in the monthly billing program, prior to permit issuance, a check, payable to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, must be provided to the appropriate District office. The application number must be included on the check.
- Refer to the EPS Training Basics for ePermitting assistance.





The applicant can expect the application to be reviewed within 30 days of receipt by PennDOT.



Contact a permit coordinator for assistance <u>HOP District and Central Office Contacts</u>

The contractor must contact the <u>PA One Call</u> prior to excavation.