

New House Prices			
Period	Number of New Houses	Median Sale Price	Percent Change in Sale Price
2005	24,571	\$378,992	8.3%
2006	22,697	\$413,825	9.2%
2007	18,397	\$424,570	2.6%
2008	13,841	\$425,000	0.1%
4 th Quarter 2007	4,155	\$410,000	-0.4%
1 st Quarter 2008	3,637	\$432,900	5.6%
2 nd Quarter 2008	4,240	\$475,000	9.7%
3 rd Quarter 2008	3,204	\$405,000	-14.7%
4 th Quarter 2008	2,760	\$380,000	-6.2%
1 st qtr 09 prelim	1,564	\$360,000	-5.3%
2 nd qtr 09 prelim	2,041	\$375,000	4.2%
3 rd qtr 09 prelim	1,726	\$370,400	-1.2%
4 th qtr 09 prelim	2,045	\$340,521	-8.1%
Source: N.J. Department of Community Affairs, 2/8/10			

Source: John Lago
Division of Codes and Standards

Permits and Prior Approvals

On May 18, 2009, the construction permit application and plan review procedures in the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) were revised with regard to prior approvals.

At N.J.A.C. 5:23-2.15(f)4ii, the UCC states that where a Department plan review is not required, an applicant for a construction permit is to file an application with the local enforcing agency. The UCC requires that all prior approvals be met before a construction permit may be obtained. However, the revised subsection (1) makes it clear that if a required State, county or local prior approval has not been granted, *plan review is to proceed* provided that the application for a permit is otherwise complete and the plan review fee has been paid. In addition, at subsection (A), an exception is included for permit applicants for plan review of individual, owner-occupied one- or two family home addition or alteration projects when zoning approval is not in place.

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Solar Photovoltaic Installations: The Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors Explains

It seems there is considerable confusion about whether an electrical contractor's license is required for solar-photovoltaic (SPV) installations. Substantially, the question is: are SPV installations, including the SPV panels themselves, electrical work within the meaning of the regulations, so as to require an applicant for a construction permit to obtain an electrical contractor's license to perform such work? The short answer is yes; except that owners of single-family homes doing work on their own dwellings are exempt.

N.J.S.A. 45:5A-1 et seq., known as "The Electrical Contractors Licensing Act of 1962" (the Act), establishes generally that no person shall advertise, enter into, engage in, or work in a business as an

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electrical contractor unless they have secured a business permit and a license from the New Jersey Board of Electrical Contractors (the Board).

The term "electrical contractor" is defined as a person who engages in the business of contracting to install, erect, repair, or alter electrical equipment for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electrical energy (N.J.S.A. 45:5A-2(d)). Accordingly, any person who engages in these activities is an electrical contractor by definition and is required to obtain a business permit and license from the Board.

SPV systems are, by definition, electrical work. They are a series of components that generate (the SPV panels), transmit, and/or utilize electrical energy. Any person engaged in installing, erecting, repairing, etc. such equipment must be an electrical contractor under the provisions of the Act.

The Act further sets forth a limited listing of exempt electrical work or construction that is not included in the business of electrical contracting so as to require a license and business permit under the Act (N.J.S.A. 45:5A-18). Neither SPV systems nor SPV panels are listed therein and thus are not exempt, *per se*.

Recently the Board considered this issue and concluded that SPV systems, including the SPV panels themselves, to the extent that they are used for the generation, transmission, or utilization of electrical energy, constitute electrical work within the meaning of the Act. Therefore, unless work was exempted by statute (e.g. operates at less than 10 volts, etc.), a contractor is required to obtain a license and business permit issued by the Board to install, erect, and repair, etc., SPV systems including SPV panels themselves.

Consequently, pursuant to the UCC, code officials should require permit applications for SPV systems, including SPV panels themselves, to be signed and sealed by electrical contractors holding a valid business permit issued by the Board.

Questions as to whether a licensed electrical contractor is required may be directed to either Marian or Kathleen of the Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors at (973) 504-6410.

Source: Joseph P. Schooley, Chairman.
Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors



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The UCC continues to require that *no permit may be issued* until all required State, county and local approvals are in place.

In sum,

- For an owner-occupied one- or two-family dwelling, zoning approval must have been obtained before plan review may proceed.
- For all other projects, plan review proceeds before all prior approvals have been obtained as long as the permit application is otherwise complete and the plan review fee has been paid.
- For all projects, prior approvals must be in place before a permit may be issued.

If you have any questions on this matter, please contact me at (609) 984-7609.

Source: Rob Austin
Code Assistance Unit

Solar Panels and Guards 

As more and more solar panels are being installed, the Department has received many phone calls asking whether guards are required for servicing the panels. The short answer is no, guards are not required.

Section 304.10 of the International Mechanical Code (IMC)/2006 states that guards shall be provided where appliances, equipment, fans or other components *that require service* are located within 10 feet of a roof edge or open side of a walking surface and such edge or open side is located more than 30 inches above the floor, roof or grade below.

Typically solar panels installed on a roof require cleaning, but not servicing. Therefore, this section of the IMC/2006 does not require solar panels to have guards.

Finally, please note that the language in the IMC/2009 is identical to that of the IMC/2006 and will be applied the same way once the 2009 national model codes have been adopted.

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

Source: Suzanne Borek
Code Assistance Unit