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UNCERTIFIED BUILDING GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All commercial buildings constructed in the State of Pennsylvania after April 27, 1927 were required to be inspected and approved by the PA Department of Labor & Industry. The buildings were to be issued a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) upon completion. Buildings that followed the regulations enforced by the state and were issued a valid Certificate of Occupancy, are deemed to be legally occupied until the owner proposes to renovate, add an addition, alter or change the occupancy of the building.

Buildings that: were not issued a Certificate of Occupancy, were renovated, altered, or had the original use or occupancy changed are therefore considered to be “**Uncertified Buildings**” in accordance with the current Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code – Act 45 of 1999, as amended.

If an individual is considering to purchase, renovate or change the use of an existing **uncertified building**, they should first address the concept of getting the building “**Certified**”, and then obtain a new valid Certificate of Occupancy.

The provisions of Section 3412 – Compliance Alternatives - of the 2009 International Building Code (IBC) as well as Chapter 13 - PERFORMANCE COMPLIANCE METHODS of the 2009 International Existing Building Code (IEBC) offer an approved compliance path to obtain proper certification of a building. The criteria and code provisions contained within the above listed codes provide specific directions on how to tabulate the values which indicate whether or not an existing structure can meet general safety measures and may become certified.

The compliance alternatives and performance compliance methods can be somewhat confusing unless someone is highly trained and skilled in such code provisions. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to consult and hire the services of a registered Pennsylvania Design Professional - an Architect or Engineer, to assist you with the above described building certification process and procedures in order to obtain UCC approval and a valid CO.

The design professional can prepare the necessary plans and drawings, as well as assist in the submission of the permit application forms. Once the submittal documents are completed, two plan copies are submitted to our office for review and approval. When approved, we will then issue an inspection directory. The permit applicant calls us to schedule the indicated inspections. We then perform the required inspections. Once approved, a new CO is issued to the permit applicant and the building owner which indicates the building is now properly “**certified**”.