

CHAPTER 159

AN ACT concerning construction permits for the installation of wheelchair ramps on residential real property and amending P.L.1975, c.217.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 13 of P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-131) is amended to read as follows:

C.52:27D-131 Construction permits; application, approval, expiration, cancellation, extension.

13. a. The enforcing agency shall examine each application for a construction permit. If the application conforms with this act, the code, and the requirements of other applicable laws and ordinances, the enforcing agency shall approve the application and shall issue a construction permit to the applicant. Every application for a construction permit shall be granted, in whole or in part, or denied within 20 business days, unless the application is limited to the construction of a ramp designed to provide wheelchair access to a one or two-unit dwelling, and required for such access by a resident of the dwelling, in which case the permit shall be granted or denied within five business days. If application is denied in whole or in part, the enforcing agency shall set forth the reasons therefor in writing. If an enforcing agency fails to grant, in whole or in part, or deny an application for a construction permit within the period of time prescribed herein, such failure shall be deemed a denial of the application for purposes of an appeal to the construction board of appeals unless such period of time has been extended with the consent of the applicant. The enforcing agency may approve changes in plans and specifications previously approved by it, if the plans and specifications when so changed remain in conformity with law. Except as otherwise provided in this act or the code, the construction or alteration of a building or structure shall not be commenced until a construction permit has been issued. The construction of a building or structure shall be in compliance with the approved application for a construction permit; and the enforcing agency shall insure such compliance in the manner set forth in section 14 of this act.

The commissioner, after consultation with the code advisory board, may, for certain classes or types of occupancy posing special or unusual hazards to public safety, establish regulations designating the department as the enforcing agency for purposes of approving plans and specifications. A municipal enforcing agency shall not grant an occupancy permit for any such class or type of construction unless the applicant submits appropriate plans and specifications certified or approved by the department. Upon submission by an applicant of such certified approved plans and specifications, the enforcing agency shall recognize the approval when deciding whether to approve the application for a construction permit.

b. A construction permit, issued in accordance with the foregoing provisions, pursuant to which no construction has been undertaken above the foundation walls within one year from the time of issuance, shall expire.

c. The enforcing agency may revoke or cancel a construction permit in the event the project for which the permit is obtained is not completed by the third anniversary of the date of issuance of the construction permit. Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, rule or regulation to the contrary, the enforcing agency may revoke or cancel a construction permit in effect on the effective date of P.L.2001, c.457 (C.52:27D-131.1 et al.), if the project for which the construction permit was obtained is not completed by the third anniversary of the effective date of P.L.2001, c.457 (C.52:27D-131.1 et al.).

d. If the project for which the permit is obtained is not completed by a deadline set forth in this section, the permittee may submit a request for an extension of the permit to the enforcing agency for review. The enforcing agency may extend the permit for a period of one year. Approval of the extension shall not be unreasonably withheld. Denial of a request for an extension may be appealed to the county construction board of appeals established pursuant to section 9 of P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-127). If a project is not completed within the deadline set forth in this section, the enforcing agency shall take all appropriate action up to and including demolition of the uncompleted structure.

The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to a permit obtained: (1) to construct improvements to the interior of a residential property in which the permittee is currently residing that are not visible from the outside of the residential property, (2) for any building of which the exterior and all required site improvements have been fully constructed, or (3) for a project while that project is under the control of a mortgagee in possession.

The enforcing agency may suspend, revoke or cancel a construction permit in case of neglect or failure to comply with the provisions of this act or the code, or upon a finding by it that a false statement or representation has been made in the application for the construction permit.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved December 2, 2015.