

REALTY ONE GROUP ULTIMATE

PENNSYLVANIA AGENT FIELD COMPLIANCE MANUAL

Dye, Zoning, & Occupancy Inspections Guide

INTERNAL USE ONLY | Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. Please confirm all information.

1. Core Architectural Concepts Under PA Home Rule

In Pennsylvania, municipal real estate transfer rules are driven entirely by local home-rule authority. Unlike states with centralized county health procedures, every individual borough and township in PA can decide exactly which physical evaluations a property must pass before title deeds can clear recording pipelines. This guide breaks down the core field items agents must arrange: Sanitary Sewer Dye Tests, Zoning Certifications, and Certificates of Occupancy.

2. Deep Dive Into Testing Classes

Sanitary Sewer Lateral Dye Tests: Enforced heavily across Western PA boroughs, these assessments verify that external stormwater drainage channels (roof gutters, driveway basins, sump pumps) are not illegally hardwired into the public sanitary sewage network, which triggers facility overflows during heavy rain events.

Zoning Certifications: Completed by the municipal zoning officer prior to real estate settlement to verify the structure's legal usage class matches records (e.g., confirming a duplex is not in a single-family zone) and that no outstanding local land-use violations exist.

Occupancy Inspections: Physical walkthroughs performed by local code enforcement looking for immediate life-safety violations (egress windows, stair handrails, smoke detectors, electrical grounding). If errors are found, agents must coordinate a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy or build a title escrow holdback to protect the transaction timeline.

3. Agent Field Execution Matrix & Arranger Layouts

Inspection Class	Core Testing Targets	Arrangement & Payer Custom	Primary Failure Triggers
Sanitary Sewer Dye Test	Roof downspouts, exterior surface area drains, and interior foundational sump pumps connected directly to sanitary lines.	Varies locally: The city/municipality may arrange the testing internally at the town level, or require the seller to hire a registered, licensed plumber. Fees typically run \$50–\$150.	Stormwater illegally entering public sanitary sewer grids; collapsed or root-blocked exterior lateral main lines.
Zoning Certification	Legal use class validation, structural setback compliance verification, and review of open code citations.	Seller or buyer applies at the municipal zoning window; pays a standard administrative filing fee (\$25–\$100).	Illegal multi-family conversions, structural encroachments past property line setbacks, or unpermitted commercial operations.
Occupancy Inspection (CO)	Physical life-safety sweeps including staircase handrails, smoke detectors, operational egress windows, and electrical grounding.	Listing agent coordinates with local building department inspector. Seller pays fee (\$50–\$250) prior to the walk-through.	Inoperable fire protection, peeling lead paint layers, missing deck railings, or severe interior electrical code violations.

4. Transaction Management & Troubleshooting Guidelines

- **Uncovering the Rules:** The moment a transaction initiates, contact the local Township or Borough Secretary immediately to clarify if utility no-lien clearances require municipal-arranged dye tests or private plumber certifications.
- **The Conditional CO Escrow:** If an occupancy inspection reveals minor failures close to the closing target, negotiate a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy. This allows title to pass provided the title company establishes a 125%–150% repair escrow holdback to fund remaining safety items within 30 to 90 days.