



County of Prince George, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

To: Property Owners, Contractors, and Design Professionals

From: Charles L. Harrison III, Director of Community Development/Building Official

Subject: Building Official’s Written Policy Regarding Approval of Third-party Inspectors and Agencies

Third-party inspections are an accepted industry practice in cases where a private inspector performs an ordinary inspection that is required by the *Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code* (USBC).

Section 113.7 of the USBC states, in part:

113.7 Approved inspection agencies. *The building official may accept reports of inspections and tests from individuals or inspection agencies approved in accordance with the building official’s written policy required by Section 113.7.1. The individual or inspection agency shall meet the qualifications and reliability requirements established by the written policy. Under circumstances where the building official is unable to make the inspection or test required by Section 113.3 or 113.4 within two working days of a request or an agreed upon date or if authorized for other circumstances in the building official’s written policy, the building official shall accept reports for review. The building official shall approve the report from such approved individuals or agencies unless there is cause to reject it. Failure to approve a report shall be in writing within two working days of receiving it stating the reason for the rejection. Reports of inspections conducted by approved third-party inspectors or agencies shall be in writing, shall indicate if compliance with the applicable provisions of the USBC have been met, and shall be certified by the individual inspector or by the responsible officer when the report is from an agency.*

Note: Photographs, videotapes or other sources of pertinent data or information may be considered as constituting such reports and tests.

For Prince George County, the following conditions will apply to third-party inspections and inspectors:

1. Third-party inspectors are permitted to conduct inspections required by USBC Section 113.3 under certain circumstances that include the following conditions:
 - a) If a Prince George County inspector is not able to arrive at an inspection site within two working days of a request or an agreed upon date or if authorized for other circumstances outlined elsewhere in this policy.
 - b) For unusual or special projects where timeliness of inspection is critical to the construction process or when adverse weather conditions are anticipated.
 - c) For other unusual conditions or circumstances when approved at least 24 hours in advance of the requested inspection by the building official.

2. Third-party inspections are considered to be the exception and not a routine practice. Their approval will be based on circumstances and on qualifications outlined in Item No. 3 below.
3. Minimum acceptable qualifications for third-party individual inspectors and/or agencies:
 - a.) **Professional Certifying the Building Inspection:**
 - May not have a direct relationship with the project (they cannot inspect their own work)
 - Shall be registered as a professional engineer or architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and
 - Shall attend any meetings required by the Building Official, and
 - RDP's certifying the inspection shall work out of and supervise the office where the inspectors are located, and
 - The RDP is responsible for assuring the qualifications and reliability of any qualified inspector(s) that they employ, and
 - Shall be approved by the Building Official prior to performing inspections
 - b.) **Minimum Qualifications:** These are the minimum qualifications of field inspectors employed by the registered design professional.
 - Shall be certified by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development in accordance with the *Virginia Certification Standards*, and
 - Shall meet the requirements of the RDP to perform approved inspections, and
 - Shall attend meetings as required by the Building Official, and
 - Shall be approved by the Building Official prior to performing inspections
4. The permit holder must submit a written request for approval for a third-party inspector to the Department of Community Development. The following information shall be included in the written request for approval:
 - a.) Permit number
 - b.) Street address
 - c.) Type of inspection
 - d.) Date of requested inspection
 - e.) Reason for the request
 - f.) Name and credentials (resume and job experience) of the third-party inspector

Once all the required information has been reviewed and approved, the permit holder will be given written approval to proceed from the Department of Community Development, or reason for denial from the Building Official.

5. Third-party inspectors will submit a report of approval of inspections to this office within two working days, in the form of a letter that enumerates:
 - g.) The permit number
 - h.) Street address
 - i.) Type of inspection requested
 - j.) Date of the inspection
 - k.) Any limit of construction work inspected or special conditions
 - l.) Certification that the work complies with the USBC and Prince George County approved construction documents present on the job site. [Note: if any deficiencies were observed, they shall be noted along with the applicable code citation. The report shall be signed by the inspector (signed, sealed, and dated if prepared by a registered design professional)].