

This information is the most common for how to obtain the necessary permits for your project and is not representative of all the conditions you may encounter.

Building Development Agencies

The Herrity Building
12055 Government Center Pkwy
Fairfax, VA 22035

- ▶ Permit Application Center
2nd floor, 703-222-0801
- ▶ Site Application Center
2nd floor, 703-222-0801
- ▶ Building Division
3rd floor, 703-631-5101
- ▶ Zoning Review
2nd floor, 703-222-1082
- ▶ Commercial Inspections
3rd floor, 703-631-5101

Hours of Operation

Monday–Thursday: 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
Friday: 9:15 a.m.–4 p.m.

Health Department

10777 Main Street
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-246-2201

V D O T

4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-259-1773

Website

Publications, forms and other useful information can be found at fairfaxcounty.gov/buildingpermits

All telephone numbers are accessible in TTY by calling 711.

This document is available in alternative formats and languages. Please call 703-222-0801 for more information.



A Fairfax County, Virginia Publication



PERMITS

You must obtain permits for a new commercial building or an addition to an existing building. Listed below are the types of permits required depending on the complexity of your project.

- ▶ Building permit.
- ▶ Electrical permit (including fire alarm systems).
- ▶ Plumbing permit (including fuel gas installations).
- ▶ Mechanical permit.
- ▶ VDOT permit (for construction on or access from a state-maintained road or right-of-way).
- ▶ Health Department permit (for food service, private schools and day care facilities).

Apply Online



Fairfax County's FIDO system allows you to apply and, in some cases, obtain your permit online. This could save you time and even a trip to county offices. Go to fairfaxcounty.gov/fido to apply.

Contractors must have a FIDO-issued identification number in order to apply. Contact the Permit Application Center to obtain yours.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

When applying for a permit, you must submit the following documents:

- ▶ [Permit Application Form](#) and equipment worksheet.
- ▶ Building plans (see Page 2).
- ▶ Geotechnical report.
- ▶ Site plan and proffers (see Page 5).
- ▶ [Building Plan Review Cover Sheet](#).
- ▶ [Statement of Special Inspections](#).

Virginia Construction Code

The Virginia Construction Code, see our [website](#) for the current edition, references the codes listed below and are available to view online or for purchase at iccsafe.org (the NEC is available on nfp.org).

- ▶ International Building Code
- ▶ International Energy Conservation Code
- ▶ International Plumbing Code
- ▶ International Mechanical Code
- ▶ International Fuel Gas Code
- ▶ National Electrical Code (NEC)

BUILDING PLANS CHECKLIST

When applying for a permit, you must submit two copies (three copies if a Health Department permit is required) of plans during the permit process. Plans must clearly illustrate the nature of the work to be performed and must show the information or meet the requirements listed below.

General

- Minimum scale of 1/8 inch = 1 foot.
- Minimum sheet size: 21 x 30 inches; no pencil.
- Code year used for the design (see Regulations).
- Name, address and occupation of the building designer.
- If prepared by a Virginia registered architect or professional engineer, the plans must bear the original signature, seal and date.
- Project name, address of the building and tax-map reference number.
- Group(s) and type of construction.
- Architectural plan(s) showing the dimensions and use of all rooms.
- Occupant load analysis.
- Building height, number of stories and floor areas.
- Building elevations (all sides).
- All fire resistance design numbers when fire-rated assemblies are required.
- R-values of building insulation components.
- U-factor of fenestration.
- Dimensions of all corridors and aisles.
- All exits.
- Means of egress analysis.
- Door and hardware schedule, including special locking devices.
- Partition schedule.
- Floor to ceiling height and height from floor to underside of lowest structural member.
- Fire sprinkler and system monitoring information.
- Any additional details or sections necessary to accurately depict intended construction.
- Occupancy category.
- Roof live load.
- Roof snow load and applicable factors:
 - ✓ Snow exposure factor.
 - ✓ Snow importance factor.
 - ✓ Thermal factor.
- Wind load and all applicable factors:
 - ✓ Wind importance factor.
 - ✓ Building category.
 - ✓ Wind exposure.
 - ✓ Internal pressure coefficient.
 - ✓ Wind design pressure.
 - ✓ Components and cladding wind pressure.
- Earthquake design data:
 - ✓ Seismic design group.
 - ✓ Spectral response coefficients.
 - ✓ Site class.
 - ✓ Identify basic seismic-force-resisting system.
 - ✓ Base shear.
 - ✓ Analysis procedure used.

Need Assistance?

You can schedule a pre-submission conference with building plan review staff to discuss code related compliance issues, special design considerations or code interpretations. Contact Building Plan Review to set up an appointment.

- Key plans indicating location of work when multiple spaces are involved (e.g., malls, office buildings, etc.).
- Certification by designer of compliance with applicable building-related proffers.

Architectural

- Completed [Building Plan Review Cover Sheet](#); attach one copy to each set of drawings. See the companion guide Accessibility Fundamentals on our website for more information.
- Completed [Statement of Special Inspections](#); attach one copy to each set of drawings.
- Soils report.
- Foundation plan.
- Footing schedule.
- Framing plan, cross sections and details showing all structural elements for each level and roof.
- Connection details.
- Material specifications.
- Live load and live load reduction.

Fire Protection

- Fire sprinkler information.
- Standpipes, fire hose valve location.
- Fire alarm locations and candela ratings.
- Card reader for card reader doors.
- Push button and control sensor for access control doors.
- Elevator recall.
- For smoke removal/control systems include:
 - ✓ A sequence of operation
 - ✓ A description of the system's function under various fire conditions.

- ✓ Details of the interrelationship with fire alarm systems, suppression systems and emergency power.
- Show fill and vent pipes, valves and provide buoyancy calculations for underground tanks of 1,000 gallon (use 1.5 safety factor). Stairwell and elevator shaft pressurization.
- Emergency generator information, to include:
 - ✓ Tank capacity.
 - ✓ Type of fuel.
 - ✓ Associated Underwriters Laboratory design number.

Shop Drawings

Shop drawings and manufacturer's data for fire alarm systems, flammable/combustible liquid tanks, sprinkler systems, range hoods or other fire protection systems require a review from the Fire Department after permit issuance. Submit your drawings at the Burkholder Building, 10700 Page Avenue in Fairfax. Call 703-246-4800, TTY 711 for more information.

Shop drawings for the main structural reinforcing system as part of the [Special Inspections Program](#) can be submitted to the Critical Structures section in Suite 316 of the Herrity building.

- Range hood fire protection information to include location of manual pull (10 to 20 feet from hood along path of egress).
- Other specialized detection and suppression system(s).
- Medical gas.
- Petroleum and liquefied petroleum gas storage tank and distribution systems.
- Fixture details, e.g., shelving, racks, stock/storage.
- Schedule of hazardous chemicals used or handled in the space to include:
 - ✓ Quantity.
 - ✓ Storage method.

Electrical

- Floor plans showing luminaires, receptacles, branch circuits (and home-runs), panels, equipment and battery packs.
- Symbol legend.
- Panel schedule to include:
 - ✓ Panel size, phases and voltage.
 - ✓ Breaker/fuse and conductor sizes.
 - ✓ Indicating if MCB (main circuit breaker) or MLO (main lug only).
 - ✓ If MLO, indicate the size of the overcurrent protection.
 - ✓ If MCB, indicate sizes. Feeder conductor sizes and insulation types.
 - ✓ Clear, evident and specific circuit identification directory.
 - ✓ If rated at 100 amps or less, verify the temperature rating of the termination, conductor or device.
- Load calculations broken into total connected and demand loads, and continuous and non-continuous load.
- Equipment schedules.
- Riser diagrams to include:
 - ✓ Size of feeder conductors and insulation types, conduits and overcurrent protection.
 - ✓ Connections and sizes of emergency/stand-by generator.
 - ✓ Fire and jockey pumps.
 - ✓ Ratings of transformers, conductor sizes, voltage levels, grounding conductor sizes and overcurrent protection sizes.

- ✓ Size of motors.
- ✓ Main service grounding detail to include the available electrodes used, the side of the grounding electrode conductor, equipment ground conductor and method of connection.
- If the modification to the service will affect the maximum available fault current (MAFC), verify or re-calculate, on the plans, the new value of MAFC and include instructions for the corresponding field marking.
- For transformer installations, include the size of the grounding electrode conductor and the rating and location of the in-sight disconnecting means for the primary.
- Exit, emergency and battery pack luminaire locations and branch circuits.

Mechanical

- Duct, piping layout for the HVAC system to include:
 - ✓ Main trunk and branch sizes.
 - ✓ Size and CFM of all registers.
 - ✓ Location of all equipment and outside air intake and exhaust air opening locations.
- Symbol and abbreviation list.
- Calculations demonstrating compliance with the Virginia Energy Conservation Code.
- Details demonstrating compliance with the UL design numbers of the required fire-rated floor, roof assemblies.

Get it right the first time

Avoid the mistakes made by others. Check out common design errors online. Go to our website and search on "[common rejection reasons](#)."

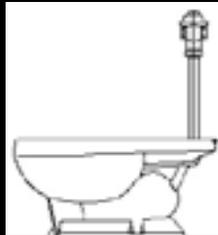
- Details for boilers and safety devices.
- Fire and smoke dampers and fire/smoke detection devices.
- Fuel oil piping in building.
- Equipment data schedule for the HVAC system to include:
 - ✓ Make and model number, BTU rating for heating and cooling.
 - ✓ Total supply and outdoor air capacities of each air handling unit.
- Identify economizer cycle when required by code. Provide sequence of operation.
- Heat loss and heat gain on a room-by-room basis for apartment buildings of three stories or less and townhouses.
- Combustion air calculations where fuel-fire appliances are installed.
- Air balance calculations for kitchens.
- Ventilation calculations per the International Mechanical Code.
- Detailed shop drawings for commercial hoods which to include:
 - ✓ Hood dimensions.
 - ✓ Construction material.
 - ✓ Size, number and type of filters.
 - ✓ Output of exhaust.
 - ✓ Size and number of ducts.
 - ✓ Method of providing make-up air and amount.
 - ✓ Evidence of compliance with Chapter 5 of the International Mechanical Code or a report by an approved testing agency indicating compliance with UL 710 for factory-built hoods.

Plumbing

- Minimum required plumbing facilities.
- Floor plans and riser diagrams showing the location of all plumbing fixtures, sanitary, water, storm and gas piping.

- Identify size, slope and type of piping material and location of all required valves.
- Fixture connection schedule including waste, vent, gas, hot and cold water connection sizes.

What are Fixture Units?



A drainage fixture unit or DFU is a value assigned to a plumbing fixture that measures its probable discharge into the county sanitary sewer. For instance, a lavatory is 1 DFU and a water closet is 4 DFUs.

Fairfax County's Wastewater Management Program charges \$401 for each new DFU to help maintain and expand the county's treatment facilities. To learn more, contact Wastewater or go to our [website](#) and search on "drainage fixture units."

- Identify all fixture symbols used on the plans and risers. Include backflow preventers and other water control equipment.
- Water pipe calculations.
- Drainage fixture units calculation.
- Water heater details including temperatures for hot water and tempering devices.

Food Service

- Food service menu.
- Layout of food service equipment and plumbing fixtures for dishwashing, food preparation, food storage, service and bar areas.
- Seating capacity and type of food service, i.e., carry-out, delivery or sit down.

- Details of equipment, i.e., water heater, to include:
 - ✓ Manufacturer, model number.
 - ✓ Output and recovery rate for producing 140 degrees F water.

Note: all equipment must be commercial standard and NSF or UL listed.

- Finish schedule of floors, walls and ceilings, including type of material and color. In some cases, a sample finish may be required.

Hotels

- Plan for a typical guest room.
- Room equipment schedule.
- Baths/washroom toilets.
- Food service plans (continental breakfast), submitted separately.
- Pool plans, submitted separately.
- Laundry room and equipment schedule.
- Water heating equipment: manufacturer, model number and recovery rate.

Private School and Daycare Facility (excluding religious facility)

- Child-size toilets.
- Area of playground.
- Water supply system.
- Sewage disposal system.
- Staff restroom.

Building Plans vs. Site Plans

All new commercial structures require a plan of the site construction as well as building plans. This publication does not address special permits/ special exceptions, public improvements, bonding or the related site plan requirements. To learn more, go to our [website](#) and search on “land use and development” or contact the Site Application Center.



Since the development of your site plan and building plans takes place at different stages during the regulatory approval process, the reviews for each may take place independently. If the site plan is not approved at the time of building permit application, simply submit an unapproved copy of the site plan with your building plans. However, an approved site plan is required to accompany the building plans prior to permit issuance.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SEALS

Some drawings, based on specific thresholds are required to be signed and sealed by a registered design professional licensed in the commonwealth of Virginia.

- ▶ Use the following tables to determine if your plans are required to be sealed. Where indicated with a “✓” requires an RDP seal.
- ▶ The Building Official is permitted to require sealed drawings regardless of the requirements herein.
- ▶ The term “registered design professional” or “RDP” is defined as Virginia licensed architects or professional engineers.
- ▶ If you are a Virginia RDP, you must sign and seal your drawings.
- ▶ Standard design drawings certified by out of state RDPs are permitted provided a Virginia licensed RDP certifies the design has been altered to meet local criteria.
- ▶ Unique designs of structural members require an RDP seal.
- ▶ When no RDP seal is required, the drawings must list the name, occupation and address of the designer.
- ▶ To determine if an RDP has a current license, go to dpor.virginia.gov.
- ▶ When certifying a set of drawings, each page must be sealed, signed and dated. However, if the coversheet containing a full table of contents is certified, the remaining pages may contain a copy of the seal, signature and date.

Building, Structural, Fire Protection

Group	Description	Area, sf			Stories	
		≤5,000	>5,000 - 15,000	>15,000	≤3	>3
A ¹	assembly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	business		✓	✓		✓
E	schools, daycare center	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	factory, industrial			✓		✓
H	high hazard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I	institutional	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
M	mercantile		✓	✓		✓
R-1	hotel, motel, dormitory	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R-2	multi-family residential					✓
R-3	one-family dwelling attached					✓
R-4	residential assisted living			✓		✓
R-5	one- & two-family dwelling					✓
S	storage (nonfarm)			✓		✓
U	utility, miscellaneous			✓		✓

¹ Places of Worship are exempt if area ≤ 5,000 sf or stories ≤ 3, and occupant load ≤ 100.

Electrical

Group	Description	Stories		Occupant Load		Volts		Amps	
		≤3	>3	≤100	>100	≤600	>600	≤800	>800
A-1, A-4	theatre, arena		✓		✓		✓		✓
A-2	restaurant, nightclub		✓				✓		✓
A-3	health club, museum		✓ ¹				✓ ¹		✓ ¹
A-5	grandstand, etc.		✓				✓		✓
B	business		✓				✓		✓
E	school, daycare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	factory, industrial		✓				✓	✓	✓
H	high hazard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I-1, I-2, I-3	institutional	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I-4	daycare/nursery		✓		✓		✓		✓
M	mercantile		✓				✓		✓
R	residential		✓		✓		✓		✓
S	storage		✓				✓		✓
U	utility, miscellaneous		✓				✓		✓

¹ Places of Worship are exempt.

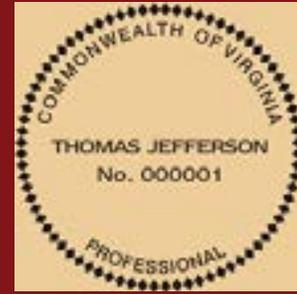
Plumbing and Mechanical

Group	Description	Stories		Occupant Load		Threshold Level ¹	
		≤3	>3	≤100	>100	Below	Above
A-1, A-4	theatre, arena		✓		✓		✓
A-2	restaurant, nightclub		✓				✓
A-3	health club, museum		✓ ²				✓ ²
A-5	grandstand, etc.		✓				✓
B	business		✓				✓
E	school, daycare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	factory, industrial		✓				✓
H	high hazard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I-1, I-2, I-3	institutional	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I-4	daycare/nursery		✓		✓		✓
M	mercantile		✓				✓
R	residential		✓		✓		✓
S	storage		✓				✓
U	utility, miscellaneous		✓				✓

¹ Threshold level is plumbing and mechanical systems using packaged mechanical equipment not exceeding gauge pressures of 125 pounds per square inch, other than refrigeration, or temperatures other than flue gas of 300 degrees F.

² Places of Worship are exempt.

Using Electronic Seal & Signature?



Electronically submitted plans are coming soon. However, if you wish to submit electronic seals and signatures to represent your paper plans, submit a cover sheet with the following information to bprmail@fairfaxcounty.gov. The file may be in PDF or TIF format with a maximum size of 10 megabytes. A paper copy of the cover sheet must be attached to each set of plans submitted to the county.

- ✓ Project name and address
- ✓ Designer name and address
- ✓ Table of contents of electronically sealed drawings
- ✓ Date of most recent changes/revisions to the drawings
- ✓ The name and version number of the software used to apply the electronic signature
- ✓ The electronic seal and signature with the software watermark

Who's water am I?

In most cases you will need to contact Fairfax Water for your connection to public water services. However, neighboring jurisdictions may be your water provider. Use the numbers below (TTY 711) to verify your water provider.

Fairfax Water 703-698-5600
 Alexandria 703-838-4488
 Fairfax City 703-385-7915
 Herndon 703-435-6835
 Vienna 703-255-6385

Who's sewer am I?



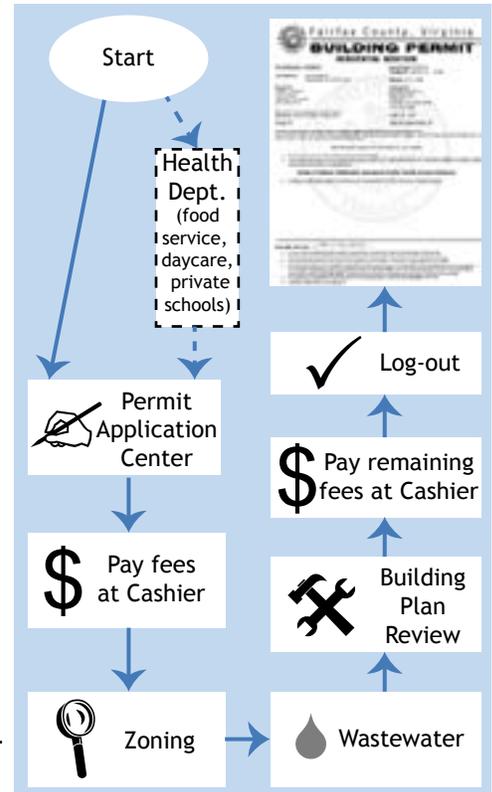
While you may connect to a sewer system of a neighboring jurisdiction, your contact to determine the requirements for any sanitary sewer connection is Fairfax County Wastewater Management.

To learn more, telephone **703-324-5030**, TTY **711** or go to our [website](#) and search for "wastewater management."

PERMIT PROCESS

When applying for your permits, bring the required documentation listed on Page 1 to the Permit Application Center or you may bring your process online at fairfaxcounty.gov/fido. See below for more information.

- ▶ When you arrive at the county, staff will direct you through the multiple-agency review process. Use the chart to the right to help guide you.
- ▶ If your building contains septic/well, a food service establishment, private school or daycare facility, you must begin your process at the Health Department.
- ▶ **Building Plan Review:** Code compliance of the plans is verified by Building Plan Review staff. The status of your reviews and review comments can be found online at fairfaxcounty.gov/fido. You may pick up your drawings or consult with staff at Building Plan Review.
- ▶ **Trade permits:** Permits for mechanical, electrical and plumbing can be issued only after the building permit has been issued. No plans are required as code compliance is verified during the building permit review process.
- ▶ Most trade permits associated with a building permit can be obtained online if the contractor completing the work is properly licensed and has an existing FIDO-issued contractor identification number.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The special programs below can help expedite the review process for applicable projects.

Modified Processing

- ▶ Large, complex commercial buildings.
- ▶ Value in excess of \$25 million for new construction.
- ▶ Value in excess of \$20 million for alterations to existing buildings.
- ▶ Allows for the application of a footing and foundation permit prior to completing the site and building plans.
- ▶ Contact the Site Application Center for more information or go to our [website](#) and search on “modified processing.”

Expedited Plan Review Program

- ▶ Priority processing for any building type, size or occupancy.
- ▶ Prior to submission, reviews are conducted by certified private peer reviewers.

- ▶ Independent peer reviewer fees apply.
- ▶ Contact Building Plan Review for more information or go to fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/epr.

Revitalization Districts

- ▶ All projects in designated revitalization districts are eligible.
- ▶ Expedited zoning reviews.
- ▶ Facilitated building plan reviews.
- ▶ Go to fcrevit.org for more information.

Fees

The building permit fee for a new commercial building is based on square footage and type of construction. Go to our [website](#) to learn more and to compute your building permit fee.

Additional fees apply:

- ✓ Filing fee is 35 percent of your permit fee and must be paid up front.
- ✓ Building Plan Review provides free initial reviews; however, subsequent reviews for plan corrections or revisions carry additional fees.
- ✓ DFU fee for Wastewater must be paid prior to permit issuance (see Page 4).
- ✓ Fire Marshal reviews, trade permits and Health Department permits carry separate fees.

INSPECTIONS

As part of the [Special Inspections Program](#), you are required to hire an inspection and testing agency to conduct inspections of specific building components. For more information, go to our [website](#) and search on “special inspections.” You are also required to obtain inspections from the county; please review the following when requesting an inspection.

- ▶ The county approved site plan, building plans and shop drawings must be available on the jobsite.
- ▶ The county must be notified when the stages of construction are reached that require an inspection.
- ▶ Ladders, scaffolds and other equipment necessary to access construction must be provided to the inspector.
- ▶ Schedule your inspections using the following options:
 - ✓ In-person during hours of operation, Herrity Building, 3rd Floor.
 - ✓ Telephone during hours of operation at **703-631-5101**, TTY 711.
 - ✓ Online at fairfaxcounty.gov/fido.
 - ✓ On the Fairfax County smartphone app. Go to your app store to download.
- ▶ Call **703-246-4821**, TTY 711 to schedule a Fire Marshal inspection and **703-246-2510**, TTY 711 to schedule a Health Department inspection.



Can I use my own inspectors instead of county inspectors?

Yes. You are permitted to have a third-party inspection team separate from the Special Inspections Program. The [Certified Inspections Program](#) allows private sector “third-party” inspection firms and personnel to conduct inspections on behalf of the county. They must be employed directly by the project owner, be independent of the contractors performing the work and have no financial interest in the project. Both the inspection firm and its personnel must be approved by the county on a project-by-project basis prior to commencement of construction.

Staff certifications are required and some restrictions apply. To learn more, go to our [website](#) and search on “third party inspections.”

Miss Utility

Before you begin excavating for your project, you must first call Miss Utility at 811, TTY 711. Miss Utility is a free service that marks underground utilities.

