CERTIFIED (THIRD PARTY) INSPECTIONS PROGRAM: IMPLEMENTATION IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

2014 Edition

Effective: July 14, 2014

Based on
Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (2012 Edition), 13 VAC 5-63-10 – 5-63-500, effective July 14, 2014 Part I *Virginia Construction Code*
Section 113.7 *Approved inspection agencies*
Section 113.7.1 *Third-party inspectors*

Administered by

COMMERCIAL INSPECTIONS DIVISION
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 630
Fairfax, VA 22035-5500
703-324-1910, TTY 711, 703-324-1846 (fax)

This document is also available from:
Fairfax County Web site www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes

A Fairfax County, Va., publication

To request this information in an alternative format, call the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, 703-324-5033, TTY 711.
Please allow seven days for preparation of the material.

Contents

SECTION 100 OVERVIEW 3

SECTION 200 DEFINITIONS 3

SECTION 300 GENERAL 5
Section 301 Project scope and third-party inspectors 5
Section 302 Third-party inspector qualifications 5

SECTION 400 INSPECTIONS 6
Section 401 Conventional buildings and structures 6
Section 402 Tenant spaces 6
Section 403 Other construction 7

SECTION 500 PROCEDURES 8

SECTION 100 OVERVIEW. The **Certified (Third-Party) Inspections Program** is Fairfax County, Va.'s policy for "third-party" inspections of commercial projects requiring construction or maintenance inspections by the Commercial Inspections Division. This program is pursuant to the *Virginia Construction Code* and the *International Building Code*, and also applies to projects using the *Virginia Rehabilitation Code* and the *International Existing Building Code*. Questions should be directed to the Commercial Inspections Division, 703-324-1910, TTY 711.

> **Exception:** This program does not apply to construction under the Special Inspections Program, nor to new residential construction of Groups R-3 or R-5 within the scope of the *International Residential Code*, nor to fire detection, fire protection or fire suppression systems, nor to inspections by other Fairfax County agencies.

The Certified Inspections Program offers property owners and construction contractors of commercial construction projects the option for certain construction inspections to be performed and certified by private sector "third-party" engineers and inspectors, to the extent specified below, when approved in advance. The Commercial Inspections Division will accept, review and approve such certified inspections, in lieu of inspections by Commercial Inspections Division staff, except in situations where there is specific cause that a particular report shall be rejected. The Commercial Inspections Division will monitor the quality of the certified inspections. The Commercial Inspections Division staff will continue to provide full support to inspection requests for projects not involved in this certified inspections program.

Private sector "third-party" inspection firms and personnel shall be employed directly by the project owner, be independent of the contractors performing the work, and have no personal financial interest in the project. Both the inspection firm and its personnel shall be approved by the building official on a project-by-project basis ***prior*** to commencement of construction.

Inspections shall be conducted under the direct supervision of, and certified by, a Registered Design Professional licensed in the commonwealth of Virginia. The Registered Design Professional and Registered Design Professional's field inspector personnel shall all possess appropriate commonwealth of Virginia or International Code Council, Inc. (ICC) inspector credentials. An inspector or Registered Design Professional approving work that is not in conformance with Fairfax County-approved plans and the *Virginia Construction Code* may lose Fairfax County approval to perform future inspections.

SECTION 200 DEFINITIONS. For the purposes of this program, listed words and terms have the indicated meanings. Words and terms not defined here have meanings as given in the *Virginia Construction Code*, *International Building Code*, and common usage.

Building: "A combination of materials, whether portable or fixed, having a roof to form a structure for the use or occupancy by persons, or property. The word "building" shall be construed as though followed by the words "or part or parts thereof" unless the context clearly requires a different meaning. "Building" shall not include roadway tunnels and bridges owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation, which shall be governed by construction and design standards approved by the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board."

"For application of this code, each portion of a building that is completely separated from other portions by fire walls complying with Section 706 shall be considered as a separate building (see Section 503.1)." (*Virginia Construction Code* Chapter 2 *Definitions*)

Building core and shell: The basic configuration and construction of a building or structure, with the "shell" structure and "core" public areas and services.

> **Building shell:** The overall structure of foundations, exterior walls, columns, floors, and roof, and including stairways, shafts, elevator hoistways, common area corridors and grade exit passageways, and all fire suppression systems throughout the building.

Building core: Public areas and services including lobbies, required accessible features and restrooms, and also including the primary and emergency electrical services, plumbing water and sewer services, and primary heat, ventilation and air conditioning systems.

Certification: A statement issued, signed and sealed by a Registered Design Professional, which shall indicate that the item(s) under consideration, in the Registered Design Professional's professional opinion and to the best of their knowledge, complies with Fairfax County-approved documents and the requirements of the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code*.

Certified inspections (third-party inspections): Inspections under this Certified Inspections Program that are performed by private sector third-party inspectors and signed and sealed by a Registered Design Professional in lieu of inspections by Commerical Inspections Division staff.

Construction documents: Documents reviewed and approved by the Building Official in support of issuing a building permit. "Written, graphic and pictorial documents prepared or assembled for describing the design, location and physical characteristics of the elements of a project necessary for obtaining a building permit." (*Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code* Chapter 2 *Definitions*)

Conventional building construction: The components and elements of buildings and structures that are not subject to special inspections (as required by the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code* Section 1704 *Special Inspections*).

Fabrication and erection documents: Documents prepared for construction of a building or structure after a building permit is issued. Written, graphic and pictorial documents prepared or assembled in addition to the approved construction documents, describing the design, location and physical characteristics of the components or materials necessary for fabrication, assembly or erection of the elements of the project.

Inspection: The observation of work and the performance of tests for certain components and elements to establish conformance with Fairfax County-approved documents and the building code as required by the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code* and this program.

Building inspection: Inspection of the construction and components of a building or structure, including loadbearing and non-loadbearing elements, fire-resistance ratings, accessibility, means of egress and architectural features, but excluding mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, and other systems or services.

Mechanical inspection: Inspection of mechanical components, appliances, equipment and systems in a building or structure, including energy conservation material, but excluding boilers, elevators and conveying systems.

Electrical inspection: Inspection of electrical components, appliances, equipment and systems in a building or structure, but excluding fire protection systems.

Plumbing inspection: Inspection of plumbing components, appliances, equipment and systems in a building or structure, including water supply systems, sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems, and fuel gas systems, but excluding fire protection systems.

Owner: "The owner or owners of the freehold of the premises or lesser estate therein, a mortgagee or vendee in possession, assignee of rents, receiver, executor, trustee, or lessee in control of a building or structure." The word "owner" shall be construed as though followed by the words "or the owner's duly authorized representative". (*Virginia Construction Code* Chapter 2 *Definitions*)

Registered Design Professional: "An architect or professional engineer, licensed to practice architecture or engineering, as defined under Section 54.1-400 of the Code of Virginia." (*Virginia Construction Code* Chapter 2 *Definitions*)

Special inspections project: A building or structure to be constructed or altered under the Fairfax County Special Inspections Program, with components and elements that ***are*** subject to special inspections as required by the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code* Section 1704 *Special Inspections*.

Structure: "An assembly of materials forming a construction for occupancy or use including stadiums, gospel and circus tents, reviewing stands, platforms, stagings, observation towers, radio towers, water tanks, storage tanks (underground and aboveground), trestles, piers, wharves, swimming pools, amusement devices, storage bins, and other structures of this general nature but excluding water wells. The word "structure" shall be construed as though followed by the words "or part or parts thereof" unless the context clearly requires a different meaning. "Structure" shall not include roadway tunnels and bridges owned by the Virginia Department of Transportation, which shall be governed by construction and design standards approved by the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board." (*Virginia Construction Code* Chapter 2 *Definitions*)

Tenant space: Construction within a building core and shell to produce a completed, occupiable area. In this context, "tenant space" is construed to mean the additional areas between a building's core public areas and the building's exterior walls.

SECTION 300 GENERAL. The proposed scope of certified inspections, and the Registered Design Professional and Registered Design Professional's field inspector personnel to be responsible for those inspections, shall be approved in writing by the Building Official on a project-by-project basis ***prior*** to conducting inspections. The Building Official's approval letter will include the appropriate Commercial Inspections Division contact person for the project. If the Registered Design Professional or the Registered Design Professional's field inspector personnel are to be replaced, the replacement personnel shall also require prior written approval by the Building Official.

Section 301 Project scope and third-party inspectors. The owner and the Third-Party Inspection team shall submit the following documents for review and approval:

- A letter detailing the specific scope of proposed certified inspections, and naming the Registered Design Professional(s) and all Registered Design Professional field personnel retained to perform and/or certify those inspections, with Registered Design Professional licensure, and evidence of qualifications for all personnel, to include résumés and copies of pertinent certifications held by all personnel involved.

Section 302 Third-party inspector qualifications. Each Registered Design Professional and all Registered Design Professional field personnel (each inspector) shall possess appropriate Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development certifications (Core module, Advanced modules, and NCPCCI or ICC examinations) or shall posess appropriate ICC certifications (ICC examinations), and shall attend periodic code update training as directed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Inspection Disciplines	Certifications	NCPCCI exam.	ICC exam.
Building inspections:	Commercial Building Inspector, and Building Plans Examiner, and Fire Protection General	1B 1C 3B	B2 B3 –
Electrical inspections:	Commercial Electrical Inspector	2B	E2
Mechanical inspections:	Commercial Mechanical Inspector	4B	M2
Plumbing inspections:	Commercial Plumbing Inspector	5B	P2

SECTION 400 INSPECTIONS. This section lists the specific inspections of commercial construction for which certified inspections may be requested under this program. Other inspections may be requested, but are subject to authorization by the Building Official. Note the exclusions, which require inspections by Fairfax County staff.

Section 401 Conventional buildings and structures in Groups A, B, F, M, R, S, and U only (excluding Groups E, H and I). (Final inspections are excluded.)

401.1 Building inspections (building shell, excluding building "core" areas).

- Footings, foundations, and slabs on grade, when ***not*** on problem soils or controlled fill, and for which a geotechnical report is ***not*** required – Footing inspection and slab inspection.
- Walls, columns, floors, roofs, floor/ceiling assemblies, and roof/ceiling assemblies – Framing inspection.

401.2 Mechanical inspections (building shell, excluding building "core" areas).

- Insulation and energy conservation material – Concealment inspection.
- Mechanical ductwork, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning appliances and equipment (new or replacement) – Concealment inspection.

401.3 Electrical inspections (building shell, excluding building "core" areas).

- Electrical systems, materials and installations – Concealment inspection.
- Reconnection of electrical services, in buildings where the power company has disconnected power because of vacancy.

401.4 Plumbing inspections (building shell, excluding building "core" areas, and excluding cross connections).

- Plumbing drain, waste and vent systems, water distribution systems, gas piping, plumbing equipment and appliance installations – Ground work inspection and concealment inspection.

Section 402 Tenant spaces in Groups A, B, F, M, R, S, and U only (excluding Groups E, H and I). (Final inspections are excluded.)

402.1 Building inspections.

- Walls, columns, floors, roofs, floor/ceiling assemblies, and roof/ceiling assemblies – Framing inspection.

402.2 Mechanical inspections.

- Insulation and energy conservation material – Concealment inspection.
- Mechanical ductwork, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment (new or replacement) – Concealment inspection.

402.3 Electrical inspections.

- Electrical systems, materials and installations – Concealment inspection.
- Reconnection of electrical services, in tenant spaces where the power company has disconnected power because of vacancy.

402.4 Plumbing inspections (excluding cross connection).

- Plumbing drain, waste and vent systems, water distribution systems, gas piping, plumbing equipment and appliance installations – Ground work inspection and concealment inspection.

Section 403 Other construction in any Group.

- Satellite dishes (free-standing, roof-mounted or wall-mounted) – Electrical final inspection and building final inspection.
- Cable television installations – Electrical "service on pole" inspection (30 amp services installed on power company poles) and electrical final inspection.
- Signs (free-standing, roof-mounted or wall-mounted) – Electrical final inspection and building footing and final inspections.
- Systems furniture installations – Electrical final inspection and building final inspection.
- Temporary structures (erected for a period of less than 180 days) such as, but not limited to, tents, bleachers and grandstands in Groups A, B, F, M, R, S, and U only (excluding Groups E, H and I) –
  Building footing inspection and framing inspection,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing concealment inspections,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing final inspections,
  Building final inspection.
- Accessory buildings and structures in Group U, including but not limited to sound/screen walls, fences and sheds –
  Building footing inspection and framing inspection,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing concealment inspections,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing final inspections,
  Building final inspection.
- Industrialized buildings, trailers and modular construction in Groups A, B, F, M, R, S, and U only (excluding Groups E, H and I) –
  Building footing inspection and framing inspection,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing concealment inspections,
  Electrical, mechanical and plumbing final inspections,
  Building final inspection.
- Demolition of buildings and structures – Building final inspection.
- Reroofing of buildings – Building final inspection.
- Asbestos abatement – Building final inspection.
- Cross connection and backflow prevention, annual reinspection – Plumbing inspection.
- Outside air balancing – Mechanical inspection.
- Water disinfection – Plumbing inspection.
- Smoke detectors and heat detectors, annual reinspection – Building inspection.
- Swimming pools, annual reinspection – Electrical inspection.
- Amusement devices, carnivals and rides – Amusement device inspection.
- Medical gas certification – Plumbing inspection.
- Other installations as approved by the Building Official.

SECTION 500 PROCEDURES. Certified inspections shall not be conducted until third-party personnel have been approved by the Fairfax County Building Official or his designee, construction permits have been issued, and Fairfax County-approved documents are available on the job site for use by the third-party inspectors.

The inspector shall not suggest, direct or authorize the fabricator, erector or contractor to deviate from Fairfax County-approved documents or the building code without written approval by the responsible Architect, Structural Engineer or Geotechnical Engineer, and Fairfax County, as appropriate. If a conflict exists between Fairfax County-approved documents and the provisions of the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code*, the *Virginia Construction Code* and *International Building Code* shall govern, and the inspection shall be rejected until revised construction documents are approved by Fairfax County.

1. Inspections as required by *Virginia Construction Code* Section 113 *Inspections* shall be performed at appropriate times prior to concealment of the work. The contractor shall provide notice to the inspectors when the construction is ready for inspection.
2. All inspection reports shall be in writing, and shall include the street address; the building, mechanical, electrical or plumbing permit number(s) as appropriate; a brief description of the area inspected; and the inspection results (approved or rejected), which shall be reported to all affected parties. If the inspection results in rejection, deficiencies and reasons for rejection shall be clearly identified by appropriate code sections/referenced standards, and shall be reported to the general contractor superintendent for correction. Items rejected, or any code violations discovered by a third-party inspector or Fairfax County staff, shall be corrected and reinspected prior to proceeding with the work. Where appropriate, photographs should be attached.
3. The inspector shall leave one copy of the written inspection report on the job site at the time of inspection, and shall annotate and sign the Fairfax County-approved construction documents on the job site to identify the areas/locations/floors inspected, inspection date, type of inspection and the results of inspection.
4. All inspection reports shall then be signed and sealed by the Registered Design Professional, and shall be submitted by the end of the next business day following each inspection, in the manner agreed by the Building Official, to the Commercial Inspections Division contact person for review and entry into the Fairfax County inspection records. If the inspection reports are to be initially telefaxed or emailed, then followed up by hard copy, the hard copy of the inspection reports shall be received by the Commercial Inspections Division within seven calendar days of each inspection. At the end of the construction covered by the third-party inspection agreement, the Registered Design Professional shall submit a certified completion statement for review and approval by the Commercial Inspections Division. Approval of the completion statement is required ***prior*** to final inspections or occupancy.