

# **FAIRFAX COUNTY THIRD-PARTY RESIDENTIAL INSPECTIONS PROGRAM**

**Effective: July 1, 2024**

Based on  
Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (2021 Edition),  
13 VAC 5-63-10 – 5-63-500  
Part I *Virginia Construction Code*  
Section 113.7 *Approved inspection agencies*  
Section 113.7.1 *Third-party inspectors*

**Administered by**

**BUILDING DIVISION  
LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

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**SECTION 100 OVERVIEW.** This document is Fairfax County's published policy for **Certified (Third-Party) Residential Inspections Program** as required by *Virginia Construction Code* section 11.7. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Building Division, 703-222-0801.

The Third-Party Residential Inspections Program offers property owners and construction contractors an option to conduct construction inspections through a county-certified "third-party" inspector. The Building Division will accept, evaluate and approve inspections from an inspector authorized under the requirements of this program, in lieu of inspections by County Building Division inspectors, except in situations where there is specific cause to disapprove the use of third-party inspections.

To qualify as an authorized provider of third-party residential inspections, the entity must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The entity shall be employed directly by the project owner.
- 2) The entity shall be independent of the contractors performing the work, and without any conflicts of interest; and,
- 3) The entity including the principal professional and inspection personnel must meet the qualification and certification requirements below and be in good standing through this Fairfax County third-party residential inspections program to perform inspection(s) (See Section 200).

**SECTION 200 THIRD-PARTY INSPECTOR QUALIFICATIONS** Third-party inspection entities must qualify in two manners: First, the entity must have a principal professional as described below. If the principal professional is not the personnel performing the onsite inspections, the principal professional must oversee the work of the onsite inspector. Second, the personnel performing the onsite inspections must hold the applicable certifications as well as be in good standing with the certifying body and Fairfax County.

Third-party inspector entity must have a principal professional with one of the following relevant qualifications:

- Registered Design Professional (RDP) licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia, accompanied by the appropriate Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Residential Inspector Certifications.
- Class A Contractor licensed with speciality designated through the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (DPOR) see section 201, accompanied by the appropriate DHCD Residential Inspector Certifications.

Additionally, the Principal Professional shall:

- Hold a minimum of four years of experience in building design, construction, or inspections and must be licensed and insured professionals in architecture, engineering, or a related discipline.
- Attend the semi-annual Fairfax County Third-Party Residential Inspections Program Meeting.

Onsite third-party inspectors performing inspections must meet the following requirements:

- Work under the Principal Professional.

## Certified (Third-Party) Residential Inspections

- Conduct inspections in compliance with the Virginia Construction Code for the area of practice.
- Possess the appropriate Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Certifications for the areas in which they are conducting inspections including Core module, Advanced modules, and a passing grade for the relevant certification examination (NCPCCI or ICC). All courses and certifications must be in place and in good standing in advance of participating and throughout participation in the program.
- Attend the code update training and semi-annual continuing education as directed by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.
- Attend the semi-annual Fairfax County Third-Party Residential Inspections Program meetings.

### Section 201 Third Party Principal Professional Qualifications Table.

<u>Inspection Discipline</u>	<u>DHCD Certifications</u>	<u>DPOR</u>
All Residential inspections:	Residential Combination Inspector	Registered Design Professional or Class A Contractors Licence in following discipline: RBC, ELE, HVA and PLB
Residential Building inspections:	Residential Building Inspector	Registered Design Professional or Class A Contractors Licence in RBC
Residential Mechanical inspections:	Residential Mechanical Inspector	Registered Design Profesional or Class A Contractors Licence with Master Tradesman license in HVA
Residential Electrical inspections:	Residential Electrical Inspector	Registered Design Profesional or Class A Contractors Licence with Master Tradesman license in ELE
Residential Plumbing inspections:	Residential Plumbing Inspector	Registered Design Profesional or Class A Contractors Licence with Master Tradesman license in PLB

### SECTION 300 APPLICATION TO PROVIDE THIRD-PARTY RESIDENTIAL INSPECTIONS.

**Prospective** Third-Party Inspectors must email [LDSBuildingInspections@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:LDSBuildingInspections@FairfaxCounty.gov) to begin the application process to become certified under this program. The applicant must provide the information below.

- Applicant's Name
- Entity Name
- Identification of Principal Professional
- Relationship of the Principal Professional to the Inspector (self, colleague in same

- firm, other business relationship...)
- Principal Professional's License Registration meeting the requirements of the program.
- Proof of Principal Professional's applicable DHCD certifications meeting the requirements of the program.
- Description of Principal Professional's experience meeting the requirements of the program.
- Identification of Inspector
- Proof of Inspector's applicable DHCD certifications meeting the requirements of the program.
- Description of Principal Professional's experience meeting the requirements of the program.
- Quality Assurance plan as outlined in Section 400

**SECTION 400 QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN.** The Principal Professional shall create, implement, and maintain a Quality Assurance (QA) plan that outlines methods to maintain the quality of all inspection services provided. The QA plan must be submitted as part of the application process for new Third-Party Inspectors. As part of the plan, the Principal Professional shall establish a written QA checklist that inspectors are to follow while performing inspections and a systematic method of verification. Results of the QA plan must be available to Fairfax County at request.

**Section 401 Quality Control by Inspections Branch.** Third-party Inspectors will be subject to quarterly Quality Control Inspections performed by a Fairfax County Inspections Supervisor within the Building Division's Inspections Branch. The Quality Control Inspection will be documented and reviewed by the Inspections Branch Chief. The results of Quality Control will be shared with the Principal Professional.

**SECTION 500 INSPECTIONS.** This section lists the specific inspections authorized 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 501 Residential Group 5** excluding dwelling units over 3 stories

- Detached single-family and two-family dwellings.
- Townhouses.
- Accessory structures of Group R-5 occupancies.

**501.1 Building inspections** 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.

- Footing and Slab inspection - Footings, foundations, and slabs on grade, when **not** on problem soils or controlled fill, and for which a geotechnical report is **not** required.
- Concealment and Final inspection - Posts, beams, floors, walls, columns, roofs, floor/ceiling assemblies, and roof/ceiling assemblies.

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

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

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

- Concealment and Final inspection - Electrical systems, materials and installations.
- Temp for Perm, Temp on Pole inspection - Energizing of electrical services.

**501.4 Plumbing inspections**

- Ground work inspection – For Plumbing drain, waste and vent systems, water distribution systems, gas piping installed underground
- Concealment and Final inspection - Plumbing drain, waste and vent systems, water distribution systems, gas piping, plumbing equipment and appliance installations

**SECTION 600 PROCEDURES.** 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; the inspection results (approved or rejected); and the inspectors printed name and signature, 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 submit the results to the county for review and entry into the county's inspections database by close of business, 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. At the end of the construction covered by the third-party inspection agreement, the Third-Party Inspector shall submit a certified completion statement for review and approval by the Building Division. Approval of the completion statement is required **prior** to final inspections or occupancy.

**SECTION 700 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.** The Inspections Branch is authorized to discipline or remove a Third-Party Inspector and/or Principal Profession from the Program for failure to comply with this manual or the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. Failure to comply with the Program may result in disciplinary actions that may include, but are not limited to the following: warning, probation, suspension, and/or removal

**Section 701 Disciplinary Violations.** It is the responsibility of the Third-Party Inspector to ensure that all construction in Fairfax County is built in compliance with local codes and ordinances. The following list of violations will be subject to disciplinary review of the Inspections Branch:

- An ethical violation by any inspector such as accepting or offering a bribe or making a threat
- Altering or falsifying reports, documents, or plans on a project
- Misrepresentation of information required for qualification or certification
- Failure to properly document and cite code violations that pertain to life safety and/or welfare to the public.
- Performing inspections while on suspension
- Failing to check for and reviewing of approved plans on site at time of inspection
- Failure to abide by the conflict of interest provisions
- Providing inspections without Inspection Branch approval
- Failure to submit documents within a reasonably prescribed timeframe
- Conducting inspections on sites with posted Stop Work Orders
- Providing inspection services prior to the issuance of a permit or approved shop drawings
- Failure to document inspection results
- Failure to provide Quality control documents
- Failure to abide by provided Quality Assurance plan
- Failure to maintain certifications and licenses