

Town of Front Royal
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
Third Party Inspections Policy

- I. **Purpose** To establish policy and instructions so homeowners and contractors may utilize private inspection agencies to be able to act as an agent of the Building Official and conduct inspections. This document spells out the qualifications required of inspectors employed by these agencies to conduct the inspection. It also spells out staff requirements for proper implementation.
- II. **Scope** Per the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) section 113.7, 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. Under this same section, if the Building Official is unable to make the inspection or test required by USBC 113.3 or 113.4 within two working days, he *shall* accept reports for review. This policy is written to comply with this requirement.

***This Policy pertains to residential projects and commercial projects that do not fall under the requirements for Special Inspections per chapter 17 of the Virginia Construction Code. All inspections conducted in Town of Front Royal must follow this policy or the Special Inspections Policy, whichever applies. All inspections shall be conducted in strict compliance with the USBC edition the permit is issued under.

III. **Definitions**

May- ok to do so but not required.

Shall- mandatory

Approved- acceptable to the Building Official or Authority having jurisdiction.

Approved Agency- an agency who has submitted all required documentation to this office and has been approved by the Building Official to conduct inspections on his behalf. They are limited to conduct only the types of inspections for which they have *Approved Inspectors*.

Approved Inspector- an inspector employed by an Approved Agency with credentials to qualify him or her to conduct certain inspections. The inspector is only approved to conduct those inspections for which they are qualified.

Registered Design Professional (RDP)- a duly licensed architect or engineer with a seal issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia to conduct business as such. See DPOR regulations for legal definition.

Approved Plans- Plans approved thru the Building Office bearing the official stamps of the building office. These stamps will appear in red.

Responsible Party- a representative of the contractor or owner who is responsible for ensuring this policy is followed. See description under general procedures.

Third Party- a person or agency other than the owner/contractor

IV. Procedures Part 1

General

Only an *Approved Agency* using *Approved Inspectors* may conduct Third Party inspections on behalf of the Building Official.

Third Party may conduct soils and concrete foundation inspections when requested by the permit holder. Third Party can only do other types of inspection when building staff cannot get to these inspections within 48 hours. Please call ahead to find out lead times for inspections.

Any required inspection except a Final inspection *may* be conducted by an *Approved Agency* as long as that agency has an *approved inspector* conduct that inspection. The required RDP will be allowed to conduct inspections in the field for which they are trained or certified

All inspections must be scheduled thru the planning and zoning office on the business day prior to the intended inspection. The request for inspection *shall* come from the *Approved Agency* by calling the inspection office, 540-635-4236. Request can also be accepted via emailing the Permit Technician. Upon receipt of a request, County staff *shall* review the permit and inspection request to ensure the agency is able to conduct the inspection and that any inspection does not happen out of sequence.

For any project where Third Party inspections are to be utilized, a *Responsible Party* must be designated for the project in advance of scheduling inspections (see Responsible Party Form). This designee is responsible for assuring that an *Approved Agency* is hired to conduct inspections. They *shall* also keep a complete log of all inspections performed on site at all times so it is available to be reviewed by any inspectors, whether third party or Town staff. Typically, this person will be the job superintendent, homeowner or an agent. This person is also responsible for notifying the *Approved Agency* well enough in advance as to allow the agency to schedule with the Town on time. Requests for same day inspections *may* be denied by Town staff.

Becoming an Approved Agency

Agencies interested in acting as Third-Party Inspection Agencies can make application using our form entitled “Approved Agencies for Third Party Inspections”. Along with the completed form, submit a company resume. Attach all of the following items.

1. Copy of the RDP license.
2. Copy of all certifications and/or licenses for each inspector intended to be used in this Town.
3. Any other documentation that shows qualifications for each inspector and the agency to conduct inspections.
4. Provide email addresses and phone numbers of the owner, president, RDP's, and persons most likely to schedule inspections from your office. Identify what number is to be listed on the Towns list of *Approved Agencies* to be handed out to the public.

After receipt of the application, the Building Official will review each application and approve an agency based on the individual inspectors qualifications submitted. Only approved inspectors may conduct inspections for approved agencies.

The Building Official reserves the right to require the agency to attend a meeting prior to becoming an *Approved Agency*, as well as any other time it is deemed necessary to successfully carry out the intent of this policy.

Maintaining Approval

It is up to the *Approved Agency* to maintain all the required information. Documentation of changes that occur must be sent to the Building Official in a timely manner. Update your approval packet prior to the expiration of insurance policies, at the hiring or loss of inspectors, upon a change of the RDP, or any point during the year at which required information becomes obsolete.

Each inspector *shall* attend Virginia DHCD provided code change training as required by DHCD. Proof of attendance shall be submitted after completion. This usually occurs every three years as Virginia adopts newer versions of the International Code Council family of codes.

At any point it is found that the agency information is outdated or expired, that agency will be immediately removed from the approved status. It is the responsibility of the agency to keep the information current.

V. Procedures Part 2, Inspection Procedures

1. Schedule the inspection one day prior to the actual inspection. When scheduling, the *Approved Agency shall* provide the following information: permit number, owner name on permit, type of inspection requested, date and time inspection is scheduled for, name of the person scheduling.
2. If the inspection is cancelled prior to arrival, call our office immediately.
3. The inspection shall be conducted in strict compliance with the USBC edition the permit was obtained under and the approved construction plans (to include site plan or plat, whichever applies). At no time shall an inspection be approved that does not conform to the *approved plans*. The *approved plans shall* be on site at all times as required by the USBC.
Approved Agencies shall not “field engineer” and approve an inspection based on plans that are not approved thru The Town of Front Royal without prior approval.
4. The inspector *shall* check records to ensure that sequential inspections have been conducted and approved prior to approving any further.
5. Once the inspector arrives on site, the inspection is no longer able to be cancelled. The *Approved Agency shall* either approve the work in writing or give written notice of defective work to the permit holder. A copy of the inspector’s field report must be submitted to this office.
6. If the permit holder requests it, the inspector *shall* reference the USBC section that serves as the basis for the defects when an inspection fails.
7. All Inspection reports *shall* be submitted in writing, shall indicate if compliance with the applicable provisions of the USBC have been met and shall be verified by the individual inspector or by the responsible officer when the report is from an agency to this office in a timely manner.
8. An approved inspection can, at any time, be revoked by this office if it is found that such approval was issued in error or on the basis of incorrect information.

At any time if it is found that an Approved Agency has violated this policy, the Building Official *may* suspend or revoke their privilege to inspect in The Town of Front Royal on his behalf. The Building Official *may* suspend or revoke individual inspectors within an agency from conducting inspections instead of the entire agency. Remember, as an Approved Agency, you are representing The Town of Front Royal when the inspection is being used to comply with the code. The Building Official may choose to revoke all third-party inspections at such times that Town staff can keep up with demand to complete inspections.

Miscellaneous

Town staff *shall* keep a current roster of *Approved Agencies* for distribution to the public.
Town staff *shall* stamp all received inspection reports with the date received. Circumstances may arise where deviation from this policy is necessary. An example may be that the design engineer of a project requires footings to be dug and concrete placed on the same day, and a delay would not allow this, or the inspection requires an inspector for many days in a row. In these circumstances, call the Building Official to arrange an agreement.