



Surry and Sussex Counties

3rd Party Inspection Policy

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.

1. Third party inspections must be approved in advance and generally will not be accepted if an inspection can be performed by the city within two (2) working days. (Holidays and weekends excluded.) An exception would be for special soil conditions requiring the observation and inspection by a licensed design professional.

2. Credentials for all third party inspection firms and individual inspectors must be submitted and approved prior to performing inspections. Qualifications include:

a. DHCD inspector certification, other state or national certifications, state professional registrations, related experience, education and any other factors that would demonstrate competency and reliability to conduct inspections.

3. Field reports of inspection must be received within two (2) working days from when they are conducted. The field report must note any code violations and/or discrepancies and how they were resolved.

4. The Building Official reserves the right to reject any inspection report if a city inspector observes a violation that was not noted in a report or if substantiated evidence is provided to suspect the validity or accuracy of the inspection outcome, subject to the right to an appeal.

5. No discounts or permit fee refunds will be provided for the use of third party inspection services.