

LICENSED ARCHITECT OR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER (A/E) SEAL ON CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

The following charts are for quick reference to determine whether § 54.1-402 of the Code of Virginia requires construction documents submitted to the local building department to be prepared by an A/E.

CHART A – GENERAL DESIGN

Construction documents for buildings or structures require A/E design as indicated below. Electrical installations and plumbing and mechanical systems are addressed separately in Charts B and C.

GROUP CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	FLOOR AREA IN SQUARE FEET			HEIGHT	
		Total net not exceeding 5,000	Total net exceeding 5,000, but not exceeding 15,000	Total net exceeding 15,000	Not exceeding three stories	Exceeding three stories
A	Assembly (all except churches)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
A-3	Churches only	No if occupant load of 100 or less	Yes	Yes	No if occupant load of 100 or less	Yes
B	Business	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
E	Educational	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
F	Factory and Industrial	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
H	High Hazard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
I	Institutional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M	Mercantile	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
R-1	Hotels, motels, etc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-2, R-3, R-4 and R-5	Residential housing, etc.	No	No	No	No	Yes
S	Storage	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
U	Utility and Miscellaneous	See Note 6				

Notes:

- In accordance with § 54.1-410(A) of the Code of Virginia, officials of local building departments may require A/E design even if not required by state law.
- Exempt construction documents must bear the name and address of the author and his or her occupation.
- In accordance with § 54.1-402(B)(1) of the Code of Virginia, construction documents for any unique design of structural elements for floors, walls, roofs or foundations are required to have A/E design.
- In accordance with § 54.1-402(A)(9) of the Code of Virginia, building or structures which are not otherwise exempted but which are of standard design are not required to have A/E design, provided they bear the certification of a professional engineer or architect registered or licensed in another state, and provided that the design is adapted for the specific location and for conformity with local codes, ordinances and regulations, and is so certified by a professional engineer or architect licensed in Virginia.
- In accordance with § 54.1-402(A)(5) of the Code of Virginia, additions, remodeling or interior design without a change in occupancy or occupancy load and without modification to the structural system or a change in access or exit patterns or increase in fire hazard are not required to have A/E design.
- Group U includes agricultural (farm) buildings and structures which are exempt from the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). In addition, Group U retaining walls with less than three feet of unbalanced fill and fences do not require permits under the USBC. Other Group U structures such as bridges, towers, private garages, tanks, etc., may require A/E design at the discretion of the local building official.