



Guidelines for Permitting Residential Docks

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This guideline provides an overview for the Building Permit requirements for docks.

Permit Application requirements:

Virginia Construction Code (VCC), Section 108.1 When applications are required.

Application for a permit shall be made to the building official and a permit shall be obtained prior to the commencement of any of the following activities, except that applications for emergency construction, alterations or equipment replacement shall be submitted by the end of the first working day that follows the day such work commences. In addition, the building official may authorize work to commence pending the receipt of an application or the issuance of a permit.

1. Construction or demolition of a building or structure. Installations or alterations involving (i) the removal or addition of any wall, partition or portion thereof, (ii) any structural component, (iii) the repair or replacement of any required component of a fire or smoke rated assembly, (iv) the alteration of any required means of egress system, including the addition of emergency supplemental hardware, (v) water supply and distribution system, sanitary drainage system or vent system, (vi) electric wiring, (vii) fire protection system, mechanical systems, or fuel supply systems, or (viii) any equipment regulated by the USBC.
2. For change of occupancy, application for a permit shall be made when a new certificate of occupancy is required by the VEBC.
3. Movement of a lot line that increases the hazard to or decreases the level of safety of an existing building or structure in comparison to the building code under which such building or structure was constructed.
4. Removal or disturbing of any asbestos containing materials during the construction or demolition of a building or structure, including additions.



Definitions:

STRUCTURE. An assembly of materials forming a construction for occupancy or use including stadiums, gospel and circus tents, reviewing stands, platforms, stages, 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.

DOCK. A structure extending alongshore or out from the shore into a body of water, usually accommodating multiple boat slips, to which boats may be moored in order to load or unload people or cargo, or to provide access to the water.

GANGWAY. A footway bridge extending from the dock, pier, bulkhead or shore, usually to a floating structure.

PIER. An elevated deck structure, usually pile supported, extending out into the water from the shore.

PILE. A timber, concrete, metal, or composite member embedded into the ground to support or brace a structure. "Piles" or "piling" are plural forms of "pile."

Engineered Design requirements:

Virginia Residential Code (VRC), Section R301.1.3 Engineered design.

Where a building of otherwise conventional construction contains structural elements exceeding the limits of Section R301 or otherwise not conforming to this code, these elements shall be designed in accordance with accepted engineering practice. The extent of such design need only demonstrate compliance of nonconventional elements with other applicable provisions and shall be compatible with the performance of the conventional framed system. Engineered design in accordance with the *International Building Code* is permitted for buildings and structures, and parts thereof, included in the scope of this code.

Virginia Construction Code requirements:

VCC, Chapter 35 Referenced Standards

The International Building Code (IBC) is adopted by the Commonwealth as the Virginia Construction Code (VCC). The minimum design criteria for a dock are provided by IBC, Chapter 35 reference standard ASCE 7-22 Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures, which includes requirements for flood loads, live load, buoyancy, and anchorage.



Permit and Plan submission requirements for Docks, Piers, and Gangways:

- Provide two sets of Zoning Approval with the location of the dock highlighted to the Building Plan Intake Counter.
- Complete the [Building Permit Application Form](#) and the [Electrical Permit Application Form](#) (if applicable).
- Provide two sets of plans on 11" x 17" (minimum) paper drawn to a scale of ¼" = 1'. For conventional wood construction provide a framing plan (view from above) showing all [joists](#) sizes and spacing, beam sizes and spans, elevations (front and side views), cross sections, all typical connection details, and pile details. Please follow [Customer ePlan Guide](#).
- Fixed docks and piers shall be designed for a minimum live load of 40 psf and a nonconcurrent 300 pound concentrated load.
- Floating docks and piers shall be designed for a minimum live load of 20 psf and a nonconcurrent 300 pound concentrated load.
- For docks constructed using alternative materials or construction such as plastics or composites submit sufficient technical data such as a research report from a nationally accredited testing laboratory such as ICC-ES, UL, Intertek, IAPMO, or other
- For docks requiring an engineered design such as floating docks, docks constructed of aluminum or steel structural framing, piles not driven to refusal, etc. submit plans and structural calculations sealed by a Virginia licensed engineer.