



Third Party Building Inspection Certification Program

Issued by: *Eric M Mays, P. E.*

Building Official

Effective: April 19, 1998

Revised: May 1, 2025

Overview

The Third Party Building Inspection Certification Program is an optional program to allow the permit holder to retain a Virginia professional engineer or registered architect to perform certain building inspections. The Virginia professional engineer or architect performs inspections under the authority of the Building Official. The permit holder is responsible for the cost of retaining the Virginia professional engineer or architect. This program was originally implemented in July 1987.

Types of Inspections

Building Inspections

- Controlled Fill
- Footing and Foundation
- Slab
- Backfill
- Load Bearing Masonry
- Structural Steel
- Fire Protection
- Smoke Control ([Special Inspections Manual](#) only)
- Concrete Encased Electrode Inspection
- Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS)
- Slab-on-Grade Insulation ([Virginia Energy Conservation Code/VECC](#) – [Virginia Residential Code/VRC](#))
- Retaining Wall Inspections
 - Footing and Foundation
 - Backfill
 - Guard Rail
 - Wall Geometry
 - Compaction
 - Layout
- Story Above Grade Plane
 - Refer to [Policy: Story Above Grade Plane](#)



Required Qualifications

- A. Professional Certifying the Building Inspection
 1. Registered as a professional engineer or architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 2. Attend an initial mandatory seminar given by the Building Development Division.
 3. Attend all additional mandatory seminars, given by the Building Development Division, to review new program requirements.
 4. Attend meetings, as required by the Building Official, to review performance.
 5. On behalf of Prince William County (PWC) give a seminar, similar to the one given by the Building Development Division, to the field inspectors working under him/her.
- B. Field Inspector Employed by the Virginia Professional Engineer or Architect
 1. To ensure that a field inspector is technically competent to perform the building inspections, the field inspector shall be certified by WACEL, NICET, ACI, ICC or an organization approved by the Building Official.
 2. Attend mandatory seminar, given by a Virginia professional engineer or an architect that is approved with Prince William County. The seminar shall cover the same information as the seminar that is given by the County to the Virginia professional engineers and architects. The Virginia professional engineer or architect that conducts the seminar shall submit a sealed statement to the Building Official that he has conducted such a seminar and attach copies of resumes and certification of concerned inspectors.
 3. Attend meetings, as required by the Building Official, to review performance.

Misconduct and Sanctions

If it is alleged that the professional certifying the inspections or the field inspector has violated the requirements of the Third Party Building Inspection Certification Program, the Building Official or his designee shall notify the professional certifying the inspections of the allegation in writing. The professional certifying the inspections shall be required to respond in writing within seven (7) calendar days. Based on the adequacy of the response, the Building Official or his designee may:

1. Determine the allegation has no merit.
2. Require a meeting with the involved parties.
3. Issue a verbal reprimand.
4. Issue a written reprimand.
5. Suspend an individual from the program for up to six (6) months.
6. Revoke the approval of an individual to participate in the program.
7. Submit a formal complaint to the APELSCIDLA Board.



The following provides examples of violations of the Program requirements:

- A. Virginia professional engineer's or architect's failure to maintain their registration in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- B. Field technician's failure to maintain his/her certification through WACEL, NICET, ACI or an organization, approved by the Building Official.
- C. Failure to attend required seminars.
- D. Failure to adhere to the program's requirements and procedures, to include, but not limited to the following:
 1. Failure to perform inspection prior to the certification of the work.
 2. Inspection and/or certification of structures in advance of the issuance of a building permit.
 3. Perform inspections without County approved drawings.
 4. Failure to inspect the Erosion and Sediment Control requirements and inform Public Works of deficiencies in a timely manner.
 5. Failure to report changes in design not approved by the County.
 6. Failure to complete and submit the [Daily Summary Inspection Report](#) to the Building Development Division, Building Construction Inspections Branch.
 7. Failure to perform inspections and submit the [Quality Control Inspection Report](#) to the Building Development Division, Building Construction Inspections Branch.
 8. Failure to follow the directives of the Building Development Division.

Third Party Application

The [Third Party Application](#) must be submitted for approval. The purpose of the application is to document each individual's experience and qualifications to participate in the program. A copy of all licenses and certifications are to be attached to the application.

Building Inspection Certification Form

The [Building Inspection Certification Form](#) has been designed to allow multiple inspections to be recorded. The goal is to reduce the overall administrative burden of the program. A copy of the inspection certification form, with the original seal and signature of the Virginia professional engineer or architect, is to be submitted to the County. Faxed certifications are not acceptable.

All information is to be completed on the top of the certification form. Under the Project/Site Data, circle the soils category I, II, or III depending on the category of soil encountered at the subgrade level at the time of inspection. See the [Soil Categories Handout](#) for the criteria for the soils in each category. The soils categories have been established as part of the County's Soil Testing Policy, which is included in the Prince William County [Design and Construction Standards Manual \(DCSM\) Section 770](#). The purpose of including the Soil Categories in the inspection certification program is to ensure that engineers and architects are aware of the soils in the area of the building or structure that may affect their inspection certification.

Check each item inspected and provide the date of the inspection and the initial(s) of the on-site inspector(s). If the inspection occurs over a period of time, enter the range of the dates



(first and last) of the inspections. Attach all required information as noted on the [Building Inspection Certification Form](#).

Slabs on Grade Perimeter Insulation

Slab-on-grade floors with a floor surface less than 12 inches below grade shall be insulated in accordance with the Virginia Energy Conservation Code (VECC) [Table R402.1.3](#) (Residential) and the Virginia Residential Code (VRC) [Table N1102.1.3](#) (Residential).

Retaining Wall Inspection Certification form and Retaining Wall Geometry and Layout Certification form

The [Retaining Wall Inspection Certification](#) and [Retaining Wall Geometry and Layout Certification](#) forms have been designed to allow multiple inspections to be recorded. The goal is to reduce the overall administrative burden of the program. A copy of the certification forms, with the original seal and signature of the Virginia professional engineer, architect or land surveyor, is to be submitted to the County. Faxed certifications are not acceptable.

All information is to be completed on the top of the certification forms. For the [Retaining Wall Inspection Certification](#) under the Project/Site Data, circle the soils category I, II, or III depending on the category of soil encountered at the subgrade level at the time of inspection. See the [Soil Categories Handout](#) for the criteria for the soils in each category. The soils categories have been established as part of the County's Soil Testing Policy, which is included in the [Design and Construction Standards Manual \(DCSM\) Section 770](#). The purpose of including the Soil Categories in the inspection certification program is to ensure that engineers and architects are aware of the soils in the area of the building or structure that may affect their inspection certification.

The [Retaining Wall Geometry and Layout Certification](#) is an optional supplemental certification to the [Retaining Wall Inspection Certification](#), and if used, must be attached to the [Retaining Wall Inspection Certification](#) at the time of submission. Check each item inspected and provide the date of the inspection and the initial(s) of the on-site inspector(s). If the inspection occurs over a period of time, enter the range of the dates (first and last) of the inspections.

See the [Retaining Wall Inspection Requirements Handout](#) for the minimum retaining wall inspection requirements.

Concrete Encased Electrode Inspection

[Policy: Concrete Encased Electrode Inspection](#) establishes the three options for the inspection and certification of concrete encased electrodes. One of the options is to inspect and certify the installation in conjunction with the building footing inspection that is part of this Building Inspection Certification Program.

If rebar is installed in the building footing or foundation that is twenty (20) feet long and



½-inch diameter, the International Residential Code (IRC), Section E3608 Grounding Electrode System requires that the rebar be used as part of the grounding electrode system. If rebar is not present in the footing or foundation, the IRC provides an option for the installation of bare copper wire that is a minimum of twenty (20) feet long and a minimum of 4 AWG.

The completed [Building Inspection Certification Form](#) for the Concrete Encased Electrode System is to be uploaded to the proper permit case (ELE or BLD) prior to the date of the Electrical Service inspection.

Erosion and Sediment Control

The field inspector shall inspect the erosion and sediment control devices to ensure compliance with the approved site development plan, lot grading plan, or with sound engineering practices. If there are deficiencies with the erosion and sediment control, the inspection may be conducted, and the inspector shall inform the Department of Public Works by email at WSSiteInspections@pwcgov.org the same business day.

Daily Summary Inspection Report

At the close of each business day, each field inspector is to fax the [Daily Summary Inspection Report – Building Certification](#) to the Building Development Division, Building Construction Inspections Branch. The purpose of the report is to provide the Building Construction Inspections Branch the necessary information to perform Quality Control Inspection the day after an inspection and to perform administrative quality control of the Building Certification forms submitted. **The Daily Summary Inspection Report is integral to the concept of going from multiple certifications to one certification per building.**

Quality Control Inspection Form

The professional certifying the building inspections as part of this program shall perform a minimum of one Quality Control Inspection each month for each field inspector under his/her supervision. The Quality Control Inspection will be recorded on the [Quality Control Inspection Report](#) and submitted to the Building Construction Review Branch or the Building Construction Inspections Branch, as appropriate, no later than the 10th day of the following month.

Story Above Grade Plane Certification Form

Refer to the Building Development Division's [Policy: Story Above Grade Plane](#) and the [Story Above Grade Plane Certification](#).

Attachment/Hyperlinks

- [Building Inspection Certification Form](#)
- [Design and Construction Standards Manual \(DCSM\) Section 770](#)
- [Daily Summary Inspection Report – Building Certification](#)
- [Policy: Story Above Grade Plane](#)
- [Policy: Concrete Encased Electrode Inspection](#)
- [Quality Control Inspection Report](#)



- [Soil Categories Handout](#)
- [Retaining Wall Geometry and Layout Certification](#)
- [Retaining Wall Inspection Certification](#)
- [Retaining Wall Inspection Requirements Handout](#)
- [Third Party Application](#)
- [Story Above Grade Plane Certification](#)