

**SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT**  
**VIRTUAL BUILDING INSPECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

EFFECTIVE July 6, 2020: Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, ONLY virtual inspections will be provided for building and trade related inspections of **occupied residential dwellings** until further notice.

Virtual inspections, an efficient alternative to in-person inspections, enables prompt service, productive follow-ups, and more specific scheduling. Virtual inspections are conducted between a customer and County inspector by using a video call on a smart phone.

**Requirements**

All building-related inspections (building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, energy) may be considered for virtual inspections, however, based on the size and/or complexity of the project it may not be possible to conduct virtually. Note: Inspection complexity will be determined by the inspector.

- Customers must have a smartphone connected to WIFI or 4G wireless service.
- Face time is the preferred app to host the video call. If this is not supported by your phone contact the inspection office the morning of the inspection between 8-8:30 to discuss other options
- If poor or no cell service or a compatible video app is not available, a video will need to be emailed to [edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us](mailto:edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us) , the inspector will review the video and determine the results. Unfortunately, this process will take longer to complete and may require additional video communication to complete. (see instructions below for emailed video inspection)

**Process**

**1. Schedule** your inspection. All virtual inspections must be scheduled in advance:

- Schedule a regular inspection (i.e., rough-in concealment, footing, final):
  - On-line at [spotsylvania.va.us](http://spotsylvania.va.us) using the etrakit system. Instructions are included in the permit packet.
  - By phone using our IVR system: (540) 507-7087.
  - Contact the inspection office between 7 and 7:30am the morning of the inspection at 540-507-7846 to confirm a time of the video call. Be sure to provide the cell phone # that will be used for the inspection and the individual receiving the call. If a contractor is involved with the project, it would be beneficial to have him/her onsite for walk through as they are familiar with the inspection process and terms.

**2. Prepare** for your virtual inspection:

- Ensure you have the necessary tools (based on the inspection type) readily available. For example; a tape measure, level, GFCI tester, step ladder, flashlight, and water temperature device.
- Make sure your mobile device is fully charged.
- Turn off phone or tablet notifications. Notifications can freeze the video feed during the call and could cause delays or require the inspection to be rescheduled.
- When using the “Typical Interior Renovation Details” package, please review thoroughly as there will be several terms listed that the inspector will use during his direction of the inspection.

The inspector will contact you via cell phone to initiate the inspection process during the allotted time slot.

Please be available during the entire time slot, the inspector will make (3) attempts during a 15-minute period, if unsuccessful, the inspector will fail the inspection(s) and the emailed report will reflect this result. It is the applicant’s responsibility to re-schedule the inspection.

**4. Accept** the incoming video call initiated by your inspector.

**5. Walk through** your inspection with your inspector, noting the following (if applicable):

- Follow directions from your inspector.
- Begin at street view looking at structure with the address showing.
- Walk the inspection in a clockwise direction.
- Walk the inspection from bottom to top, if multiple floors. If residential, top to bottom to follow load path if applicable.
- Make note of any items that require correction.

### **Inspection Results**

Your inspector will tell you in the video call if the inspection has passed or failed.

Results will be processed in the permitting system and emailed to the contact listed in our permit system.

If the inspection failed:

- Comments will be listed in the emailed inspection report.
- The inspector will determine if additional fee(s) for re-inspection is required.

## EMAILED VIDEO INSPECTION GUIDELINES

Video the affected areas and submit the video to [edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us](mailto:edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us) for inspection. Please include the permit number and contact information.

For basement or interior renovation rough-in inspection the video must include the following:

Insure the video includes a screen shot of the permit:

- All new or altered framing, including on center spacing, top and bottom wall plates, fire stop, stud and top plate penetrations. Video of penetrating items such as water/drain waste and vent lines, electrical circuits, etc. Show the distance from the face of the stud or plate to the penetrating item.
- All electric circuits must be shown from point of origination too termination in an appropriate box or device. Conductors shall be stripped of the nm jacket and grounds made up in all electrical boxes and visible in the video. Outlet spacing must be verified by the use of a tape measure. Overcurrent devices and circuit identification should be included in the video.
- All new plumbing shall be tested per the code and included in the video showing the pressure gauge reading and any head pressure test applied.
- New or altered duct work or mechanical equipment must be included in the video including the manufacturers label of the equipment. All newly installed or replaced gas line and/or vented appliance must be tested and certified in writing by a master HVAC tradesman to be in compliance with the code and manufacturers specifications. This should be emailed with the video.
- Newly installed or required insulation must be included in the video for an insulation inspection
- Final inspections may be delayed until after the effective date ends. If a final inspections is absolutely necessary prior to the end of the effective date of this policy please contact Ernie Deihr, Deputy Building Official at 540-507-7251 or [edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us](mailto:edeihr@spotsylvania.va.us).

## HVAC AND WATER HEATER REPLACEMENTS (revised July 6, 2020)

UPON COMPLETION OF THE INSTALLATION THE TECHNICIAN MUST VIDEO THE APPLIANCE INSTALLATION. THE VIDEO MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- THE APPLIANCE AND CLEARANCES AROUND IT
- THE DATA LABEL AND OVERCURRENT DEVICE (includes heat pump if applicable)
- THE GAS LINE, SHUT OFF, UNION, SEDIMENT TRAP/DRIP LEG AND ELECTRICAL BONDING
- VISIBLE VENT, VENT CONNECTIONS, TERMINATION, AND CLEARANCE TO COMBUSTIBLES
- OVERFLOW PAN AND DRAIN IF REQUIRED

THE VIDEO SHOULD BE EMAILED TO BOTH [BMARVIN@SPOTSYLVANIA.VA.US](mailto:BMARVIN@SPOTSYLVANIA.VA.US) AND [KPERRY@SPOTSYLVANIA.VA.US](mailto:KPERRY@SPOTSYLVANIA.VA.US) AND INCLUDE THE PERMIT NUMBER, A COPY OF THE APPLIANCE MANUFACTURERS INSTALLATION SPECIFICATIONS AS WELL AS THE COMPLETED REQUIRED VENT CERTIFICATION FORM. MAKE SURE THE VENT FORM IS FILLED OUT COMPLETELY AND SIGNED BY THE LICENSED TRADESMAN.

AN INSPECTOR WILL VIEW THE VIDEO AND EMAIL YOU BACK ANY DESCREPIENCIES THAT REQUIRE CORRECTION, OR AN APPROVED INSPECTION REPORT. CORRECTIONS OF ANY FAILED INSPECTIONS MUST BE EMAILED AS ABOVE ONCE COMPLETE.

Questions may be directed to Ernie Deihr at 540-507-7251

**OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

- Inspection and certification by a Master Tradesmen not associated with the work performed will be accepted for electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and gas installations.
- Framing inspection may be conducted by a registered design professional(Engineer) or a pre - approved 3<sup>rd</sup> party agency that provides their qualifications to the Building Safety Office for review and approval prior to the inspection.
- DELAY INSPECTIONS UNTIL THE EXPERATION OR TERMINATION OF THIS POLICY. NOTE: NO WORK MAY BE CONCEALED WITOUT INSPECTIONS.