



Requirements for building a house or addition, or for finishing off space



Your guide to the permit and inspection process

Chesterfield County, Virginia
Providing a FIRST CHOICE Community
through Excellence in Public Service

Chesterfield County
9800 Government Center Parkway
Chesterfield, VA 23832-0040

Building Inspection Department
Phone: (804) 748-1057
Fax: 751-4713

Planning Department
Phone: 748-1050
Fax: 717-6295

chesterfield.gov



When is a permit required for residential property?

The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code requires a building permit for any house, addition or work to finish off existing space. It states any work that is *structural* in nature requires a permit. It does exclude cosmetic changes such as painting, installing vinyl siding, replacing carpet, etc, and "ordinary" repairs such as replacing cabinetry, kitchen appliances (except gas equipment), electrical switches, electric water heaters, reroofing, etc. Call the Building Inspection office if you are in doubt.

What is the process?

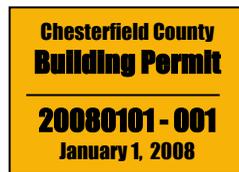
The process is simple but requires some coordination:

1. When considering where to place your structure on the lot, contact the Planning Department (748-1050) for setback and easement requirements.

2. Gather all of the necessary documents.



3. Complete the permit application(s), submit the construction documents and pay the required fees.



4. Wait for the permit to be issued.



5. Start construction.



6. Call for the required inspections.



What documents do I need?

New house or addition



1. **Plot plan** — showing the proposed distances of the structure to all property lines. A survey plat or a legible drawing showing the structure's footprint with relation to the property lines is acceptable.

2. **Construction drawings** — two sets are required, including:

- ✓ Engineered soil report showing shrink-swell potential (required for all new houses and additions with habitable space in Triassic basin)
- ✓ Elevations
- ✓ Footing and foundation plan
- ✓ Floor plan(s)
- ✓ Roof plan
- ✓ Truss layout plan and detail sheets (if trussed)
- ✓ Floor joist layout
- ✓ Section through house or addition
- ✓ Details of construction

Finishing off existing space

1. **Scope of work statement** — required so plan reviewer and inspector can differentiate between what is existing work and what is new work.
2. **Construction drawings** — required if the work involves new walls, or structural modifications.



Notes for residential work:

✓ The Virginia Residential Code is the applicable building code for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Copies of the code are available in the library or can be viewed at the Building Inspection Department.

✓ Drawings may be prepared by the homeowner or contractor. For most single-family dwellings, a registered architect or professional engineer is not required, but depending on your experience and training, they may be worth the investment.

✓ The Building Inspection plan reviewer will perform a check of the plans to verify structural integrity and code compliance. If the documents are incorrect or need further information, the plans will be returned to the submitter for corrections and re-submittal.

✓ The county does not review electrical, mechanical, gas or plumbing trade drawings. The subcontractor must build in accordance with the code, and the work will be inspected by the appropriate inspector.

✓ The Environmental Engineering Department will determine when you can begin clearing the land.

✓ Do I have to bring the whole building up to code if I do nonrelated work elsewhere in the house?
No. Only those portions of the work under the permit must be built to the current code.

Who can apply for the permit?

The homeowner or contractor who is going to do the work can apply for the applicable building or trade permit(s).





What permits do I need?

The following permits may be required for a new house:

- ✓ Building permit
- ✓ Electrical permit
- ✓ Mechanical permit
- ✓ Plumbing permit
- ✓ Gas permit (if applicable)

For additions and when finishing off existing space, the permits listed above may be required depending on the specific work.

What are the fees for the permits?

Information concerning fees is available on our Web site www.chesterfield.gov/bi or by calling the Building Inspection Department and is subject to annual change.

How long does it take to get the permit?

The permitting process requires the approval of the:

- Building Department
- Planning Department
- Environmental Engineering Department
- Utilities Department
- Budget Management
- Health Department (if the house is on a well or septic system)

It is the goal of Chesterfield County to have all residential plans reviewed within 10 working days. By logging into the county's Web page and entering the permit number, you can find out the permit status. When your construction documents are in order and you have received approval from all of these departments, a building permit and one set of **Approved Field Plans** will be mailed to you, or you may pick them up at the Building Inspection Department depending on the option you selected on the application form.



How do I make changes to the plans during the construction phase?

During the course of construction, you may find it necessary to change your plans. There are two different processes to get this accomplished:

- An **amendment** is required if your change affects any of the departments besides the Building Inspection Department. Examples of such work include changing the size of the house or changing the footprint of the building. There is a fee associated with an amendment.
- A **structural revision** is required even if the work does not impact any other department. The typical process requires the applicant to submit the **Approved Field Plans** to the Building Inspection Department for an over-the-counter approval (if it is complicated, it may take 24 hours for approval). Examples of such work include changing structural materials, changing room layout, or adding a closet. There is no fee associated with a structural revision.



Why do I need a soil report?

The quality of soil in Chesterfield County varies by location, and certain areas are prone to differential settlement, meaning that the footings may be subject to inconsistent bearing. In order to determine if your site has this potential for "shrink-swell", a soil report is required for all new houses in the county. If you are constructing an addition with habitable space, you are also required to have a soil report if your property is in the Triassic Basin (map available on the Building Inspection Web site). This report is not to be confused with a perk test that is required for septic systems. In order to have a shrink-swell test, you can hire a soil scientist or engineer to perform that service. If the soil analysis results from moderate to very high shrink-swell potential, an engineered footing will be required.



What inspections are required?

The following inspections are typically required for new homes, additions, conversions and finishing off space depending on the scope of work and specific construction details.

- ✓ Footing inspection – after the trench is dug
 - for new houses, this inspection must be done by an engineer hired by the applicant.
 - for additions, this inspection will be done by the county.
- ✓ Projection inspection – after the first course of block is laid
- ✓ Foundation inspection – after backfilling of crawl space
- ✓ Poured walls – after installation of rebar, but prior to pouring concrete
- ✓ Slab inspection – prior to pouring concrete for basement or garage floor
- ✓ Drainage/waterproofing – prior to backfilling foundation
- ✓ Veneer inspection – after installation of exterior sheathing and all exterior doors and windows
- ✓ Rough electrical – after all wires are pulled
- ✓ Rough mechanical – after all ductwork is installed
- ✓ Rough gas – after all gas piping is installed
- ✓ Rough plumbing – after all plumbing lines are installed
- ✓ Framing inspection – after all of the trades have approved rough-ins, but prior to insulating or covering the walls
- ✓ Insulation inspection – after the framing inspection
- ✓ Final electrical – after all electrical work is completed
- ✓ Final mechanical – after all mechanical work is completed
- ✓ Final gas – after all gas work is completed
- ✓ Final plumbing – after all plumbing work is completed
- ✓ Final building inspection – after all trades are completed and lot is graded
- ✓ Final inspection(s) by applicable county departments.

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to be sure the **Approved Field Set** of plans are available at all times during the construction.



How do I get an inspection scheduled?

There are two ways to request inspections:

1. Call (804) 751-4444, the automated Interactive Voice Response system, and request an inspection.
2. Call (804) 751-4990, to speak to a customer service representative and request your inspection.

When can I move in?

For a new house, once you have obtained an approved final building inspection and approvals from all applicable county departments, you will be issued a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) and will be allowed to move in. A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) may be granted by the county for certain non-safety related situations.

For additions and finishing off space, the homeowner will be allowed to move into the space after all of the final inspections are completed.



Prior to digging call

Miss Utility — Dial 811

Miss Utility is a free service that will locate all member utilities that may have facilities in your proposed area of excavation. Notification must be made a minimum of 48 hours prior to any excavating.