



# City of Alpharetta

## Residential Building Inspections Policies & Procedures

## NOTICE

This document is a summary of various federal, state, county, and city building construction laws and the rules and regulations. The information within is not all inclusive, nor is it designed to be, but rather presents a general overview of construction laws and processes relative to planning, permitting, constructing, inspecting, and completing a residential construction project in the City.

For the purpose of this document, the following shall apply to the use of words and phrases: Words used in present tense include future tense. Words used in singular tense include plural tense. The word "he" also means "she." The words "shall" or "must" are always mandatory. The words "may" or "can" are permissive. The word "and" indicates all conditions, requirements, or factors so connected must be met or fulfilled, whereas the word "or" indicates that at least one condition, requirement, or factor so connected must be met. The word "structure" means anything that is built and includes the word "building." The word "person" means any individual, corporation, association, firm, partnership or other legal entity. The word "permit" means written governmental permission issued by an authorized official, empowering the holder thereof to do some act not forbidden by law, but not allowed without such authorization.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this document is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not effect the validity of the remaining portions of this document.

As a public service, this document may be accessed and downloaded free of charge at:

[www.alpharetta.ga.us](http://www.alpharetta.ga.us)

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## Residential Building Codes

Applies to detached one and two family dwellings and one family townhouses not more than three stories in height and accessory structures located upon residential sites within the City permitted on/after 1/1/2014.

**Administration:** (in cases of conflict between codes / ordinances, the more restrictive shall apply)

The Code of the City of Alpharetta, Georgia – latest revision.  
1994 Standard Building Code (*IBC*), Chapter 1 – Administration  
City of Alpharetta Unified Development Code (*UDC*) - latest revision.

**Building:** 2018 International Residential Code (*IRC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Property Maintenance:** 2003 City Property Maintenance Code, latest edition.

**Mechanical:** 2018 International Residential Code (*IRC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Gas Piping:** 2018 International Residential Code (*IRC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Plumbing:** 2018 International Plumbing Code (*IPC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Electrical:** 2020 National Electrical Code (*NEC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Energy:** 2015 Georgia Energy Code for Buildings (*IECC*), with Ga. Amendments.

**Water Conservation:** Alpharetta Water Conservation Requirements for New Construction

**Sprinkler:** City Domestic Sprinkler Installation Code, Ordinance No. 220 latest revision.

**Pools:** See Swimming Pool Permitting Procedures.

**Soils Erosion:** Alpharetta Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Ordinance - latest revision.

**Accessibility: (Voluntary)** Georgia Accessibility Code – Rules and Regulations of the Georgia Safety Fire Commissioner Chapter 120-3-20, latest revision.

**Industrialized Buildings:** Industrialized Buildings Rules of Georgia Commissioner of Community Affairs O.C.G.A. 110-2, latest revision.

**Manufactured Housing:** Rules and Regulations of the Georgia Safety Fire Commissioner Chapter 120-3-7, latest revision.

**Site Walls, Walks, Drives:** City Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 4.4.5, or site specific drawing by Georgia Architect or P.E.

Ga.Amendments: [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov) (See *Construction Codes listed under Local Government Assistance*)

**Note:** Be sure to check Errata to Georgia Amendments while on the DCA Website

## Preparing For Inspections

### GENERAL:

The Building Official shall inspect, or cause to be inspected, at various intervals all construction or work for which a permit is required. Final inspections shall be made of every building, structure, mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, gas, energy conservation, or fire protection systems upon completion by the permit holder and prior to the issue of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for a building or habitable structure, or a Certificate of Completion (CC) for swimming pools, garages, site walls, and other residential accessory structures.

To expedite inspection approvals, the building official does recommend permit holders and contractors provide responsible construction representatives at inspection sites during inspections. Representatives should be prepared to answer inspector questions regarding the work to be inspected.

Permit holders and contractors should discuss inspection preparedness with inspectors at the start of work.

City inspectors are prohibited from entering and making any interior building inspections at occupied buildings without the permit holder, or property owner, or an authorized adult being present to grant premises entry and staying with the inspector at all times until the inspection has been completed.

### POSTING OF BUILDING PERMIT:

Work requiring a permit shall not be started until the permit holder posts a City issued building permit yard card in a conspicuous visible place at the front of the premises where the permitted work is to be done.

Permit yard cards must be accessible and readable from the public right-of-way and located in such a position as to permit City, County, or State officials to view and make required entries thereon.

Permit yard cards shall be maintained in position until all required final inspections have been approved and signed off on the yard card and the building, structure or system is ready for occupancy and use.

The permit holder is responsible for maintaining the permit yard card. All damaged, lost or stolen permit yard cards shall be replaced before further inspections can be made. A fee is charged for replacement.

### STAND ALONE SUBCONTRACTOR PERMITS:

When no building permit is associated to work being performed on a site, such as a plumbing permit to change out a water heater, or an HVAC permit to change out an air conditioning compressor, etc., a copy of the subcontractor permit will be given to city inspectors at the time of permit issue.

When the permitted work is ready for inspection, it is a responsibility of the permit holder to contact city inspectors for the required inspection, giving inspectors the permit number, site street address, and the inspection requested.

When city inspectors perform the requested inspection for stand alone permits, the inspector will write the results of the inspection on the inspector held copy of the permit form and leave the form on site.

If the inspection passes, the property owner may keep the inspection report for proof of code compliance.

If the inspection fails, the inspector will note violations on a "Red-Tag" Notice and leave the Red-Tag on site. It is a responsibility of the permit holder to correct all noted violations and re-call the inspection, when ready.

**EROSION INSPECTION:**

No inspections will be made by City building inspectors on any construction site not having "effective" soil erosion control measures in place, per *UDC §3.1*.

Site silt fences, rockered construction entrances, and other City required erosion control measures shall be constantly maintained in a good state of repair to effectively contain all erosion within the site limits and away from adjoining sites, out of state waterways, and to contain mud, silt, or other construction debris out of streets and paved walkways.

City inspectors will not do requested inspections when, in their opinion, the site is in need of erosion control repair and violates *UDC §3.1*. Inspectors will post a Notice of Violation (Red-Tag) on the permit yard card and will immediately leave the site without making the requested inspection.

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to notify City Engineering Department, **678-297-6070**, to obtain written erosion release on the site, regardless to whose fault erosion problems are attributed to.

No further building inspections will be performed at any violation site until the permit holder notifies inspectors that City Engineering has released the site for continuing of work. A dated release signature on the yard card or other means acceptable to building officials is required for inspections to continue.

**REQUESTING INSPECTIONS:**

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to prepare the work site for any requested inspections or other site inspection that may occur during the construction process.

The permit holder may request a building inspection during normal inspection request hours of **7:30am - 8:30am**.

## **Mandatory Building Inspections**

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permit holder or his authorized agent, shall make the following building inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the yard card, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permit holder or posting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**FOOTING:** To be made after trenches are excavated and cleaned; forms erected and supported; required reinforcing is properly secured in place and supported; and before any concrete is placed.

**BUILDING SLAB PREP:** To be made after footings have been placed; underground Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing systems have been City inspected, approved, and properly backfilled; under-pin areas are excavated and clean; forms are erected and supported; required reinforcing steel is in place and supported; a four inch (4") minimum thickness base complying with the *IRC* in place for below grade slabs; and a vapor barrier with joints lapped not less than six inches (6") is properly installed before any concrete is placed.

**MONO SLAB-PREP:** To be made after applicable underground Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) systems have been City inspected, approved, and properly backfilled; forms are erected and supported; required reinforcing is properly secured in place and supported; a four inch (4") minimum thickness base complying with the *IRC* in place for below grade slabs; and a vapor barrier with joints lapped not less than six inches (6") is properly installed before any concrete is placed.

**FOUNDATION:** (Applicable to all building foundation walls and all site walls.) To be made after required wall reinforcement is in place and one side of concrete wall forms are secured in place, wall cavities are cleaned, and second side wall forms are ready to be placed; or all wall forms are in place and safe OSHA compliant scaffolding is provided to all wall form tops for inspections, weep holes and piping sleeves are in place, and before any concrete is placed.

In the case of masonry walls; - block is erected and required wall reinforcing is in place and safe OSHA compliant scaffolding is provided to all wall top for inspection, weep holes and piping sleeves are in place, and prior to any wall cavity grouting or fill.

In the case of cross-tie or other approved wood site walls; - ties or timbers are in place and properly fastened together, tee style or professionally designed dead heads are in place and properly fastened together (per plan sealed by a Georgia professional engineer on site), weep holes and filtration cloth is in place, and before any backfill is placed.

**WATER / DAMP PROOFING:** To be made after the Foundation inspection but before any wall backfill is placed. City inspectors must verify proper application and placement of wall water-proofing or damp-proofing systems, drain tile, rock, and that approved filtration material cover is in place.

Where a sub-grade foundation wall is installed, or where renovation of an existing building sub-grade area creates habitable space, a water proofing "Certificate of Compliance" to the manufacturer's recommended rate of sealing material application and technique is required to be submitted to building officials by the authorized applicator,

prior to issue of a Certificate of Occupancy for the building or space. For sub-grade non-habitable spaces a damp proofing "Certificate of Compliance" is required.

**EXTERIOR SHEATHING:** This inspection is made prior to the Framing inspection and verifies the fastening of exterior sheathing, prior to covering sheathing with code required water resistive barriers.

**ROUGH & FRAMING** To be made after roof is complete; all framing, bracing, fire stops and blocking are effectively in place; exterior walls and gabled ends are covered with weather protective barriers and doors and windows are installed and sealed to effectively weather protect the structure interior; all mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-ins are complete and under required tests; fuel burning appliance roughs are installed with chimneys, flues and vents through exterior walls and roofs and weather capped to provide weather protection to all interior spaces and before any insulation or wall or ceiling cover has been placed. Do not cover anything without city inspection.

**INSULATION:** To be made after the Rough & Framing inspection but before any floor, wall, or ceiling cover is installed. The purpose of this inspection is to verify *IECC* thermal envelope compliance at all places to be concealed by floor, wall, or ceiling cover.

**Note:** Blown attic insulation and basement wall exposed insulation will be verified at Final inspection.

**FIRE RESISTANCE RATED CONSTRUCTION:** (Applies only to those instances where fire resistant rated construction is required between dwelling units or due to location on property)

To be made after the rated wall or ceiling cover is in place and properly fastened but before joints and fasteners are taped and finished. All penetrations of rated assemblies must be in place and properly sealed.

Rated construction is required between townhouses; on exterior walls within five feet of the property line; and on the ceiling of a residential garage when there is habital space above the garage.

**BUILDING FINAL:** To be made after a building or structure is complete and ready for safe occupancy and use. Building, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing finals shall be made at the same time.

Prior to requesting a building final inspection the permit holder shall assure that all inspections and written approvals required prior to final inspections are signed off on the building permit yard card.

All site work, walks, drives, paved areas, and landscaping required must be completed, final inspected, and signed off on the permit yard card (left side) by the various Departments or Authorities listed and checked at permit issue, prior to the issue of any Certificate of Occupancy or Completion.

**ENGINEERING FINAL:** (Applicable to any building site where an Engineering Permit ("Pink Card") was issued.

To be made at the end of construction, before or after Final building inspection, but before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued for construction.

This inspection is made by the City Engineering Department. **678-297-6070**.

The purpose of this inspection is to assure site drainage, soils & erosion control, tree protection, and all public walks, curbs, and drives are in place, in good repair, and meet city engineering requirements.



## **Mandatory Mechanical (HVAC) Inspections**

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permit holder or his authorized agent, shall make the following mechanical inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the yard card, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permit holder or posting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**UNDERSLAB MECHANICAL:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated, underground ducting, gas piping, conduits and sleeves are installed and under required test and before any backfill is put in place. After passing this inspection, the trench may be backfilled, but another inspection is required before concrete is poured.

**ROUGH-IN:** To be made with framing inspection and after all HVAC equipment, ducting, duct insulation, piping, piping insulation, fire stops, control wiring, or other concealed mechanical system components are in place, completed, supported properly, required pressure tests are applied, and flues and vents are stubbed through the roof and weather capped; and before any wall or ceiling covers are installed. Do not cover anything without city inspection.

**GAS LINE ROUGH PIPING:** To be made with framing inspection and shall include all system piping from the point of delivery (gas meter) to within six feet (6') of and in the same room as all outlets or appliances that may be connected. The City requires a gas pressure test for this inspection, per the *IRC* (see METERS below for additional gas line testing required)

**METERS:** To be made after rough piping inspection and before the final inspection; when all HVAC and other gas fired appliances and equipment and controls are in place and ready for safe test operation; venting, vent connectors, and flues are installed into final position and supported; piping runs are complete to the final appliance connector or union connection at the appliance or equipment; all gas shut off valves are in place and in the "off" or closed position, with appliances or equipment disconnected; and the gas piping system is ready for public utility connection and testing.

The City requires a Final Gas Line pressure test at this inspection, per the *IRC*. The sole purpose of this Meters inspection is to allow the installer to check out all installed mechanical systems and equipment for proper and safe operation, per its listing, prior to Final inspection.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building final inspection and after public utilities have been connected and all conditioned air systems and gas fired appliances are in full operation; all controls, compressors, condensate drains, insulation, ties and supports, and other system designed components are in place and final connected, all final trim and required labeling is in place, filters or other air purifying components are cleaned and in place, and all systems have been tested and balanced and the installation is ready for its intended use.

At the final inspection, the Energy Code Compliance Certificate must be posted near the electrical panel or air handler.

## **Mandatory Electrical Inspections**

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permit holder or his authorized agent, shall make the following electrical inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the yard card, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permit holder or posting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**TEMPORARY POLE:** (Use restricted to active construction sites and permitted temporary uses) To be made after a minimum 4x4 temporary electrical power pole has been set upright firmly into the ground with a minimum two feet (2') buried. A grounding electrode system must be installed per *the NEC*.

A weatherproof enclosure and meter base meeting the requirements of the local public utility power provider and *the NEC* shall be connected and firmly attached to the pole.

The City requires at least one (1) 115V/20A weatherproof duplex service outlet and one (1) 230V/30A service outlet to be installed at each temporary pole. Outlets shall be GFCI protected per the *NEC*.

**UNDERSLAB ELECTRICAL:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated, underground conduits, sleeves, or other devices are installed and before any backfill is put in place. Do not bury anything without inspection. After passing this inspection, the trench may be backfilled, but another inspection is required before the slab is poured.

**ROUGH-IN:** To be made with the building framing rough-in inspection and after all service cable, branch circuit distribution wiring, and low voltage wiring to be concealed is in place and stubbed into panel boxes set and secured to the structure; outlet, junction, and fixture boxes are in place and secured; required conduit is in place and fastened properly; wiring is protected from physical damage; and before any wall or ceiling membranes are installed. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

In situations where a dwelling unit's exterior siding or finish veneer has not been installed, cables, feeders, and fixture wiring to be concealed shall be stubbed close or into exterior wall cavities closest to the point of final connection and coiled into place.

Wall or ceiling cavities containing stubbed cables or wiring shall not be closed until inspection of terminal runs has been approved at the Meters inspection.

**METERS:** To be made after framing and all wall coverings are in place and before final inspection; when all electrical service and control equipment is set, wired, fused, bonded and grounded, required disconnects are connected, all outlet devices and switch controls are connected, lighting fixtures, appliances, and equipment are set or boxed out and ready for safe operation, and the electrical system is ready for connection to public utilities.

The sole purpose of this Meters inspection is to allow the installer to check out all installed electrical systems and equipment for proper and safe operation per its listing prior to Final inspection.

**LOW VOLTAGE:** To be made with the rough-in inspection, as applicable to where low voltage wiring systems are to be concealed; or with the meters inspection, where low voltage wiring systems are to be surface mounted. Where concealed, inspection shall include review of distribution wiring / cable types, rating, boxes, connections, wiring protection from physical damage, grounding, bonding, disconnects, control panel enclosures, and other system components. Do not cover anything without city inspection.

Where surface mounted, inspection shall include review of raceway types and mounting, wire fills to manufacturer's specifications, connection points (must be open to view, except that plug-in types shall be connected), grounding and bonding, disconnects, outlets and plugs, control panel cabinets or enclosures, and other system components.

**IRRIGATION:** To be made when all irrigation system wiring and conduit is in place; control panels, transformers, and their enclosures are mounted; junction boxes and splice points are open to view, high voltage power wiring is in place and GFCI protected, and the system is ready for safe operation.

GFCI protection for irrigation system wiring and controls is mandatory and may be provided by direct plug and cord connection from the transformer primary to a GFCI protected wall outlet or hard wired from the primary to a disconnect that is protected by a GFCI breaker located at the electrical panel.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building final inspection, after all public utilities have been connected and all installed electrical systems are in full operation; all equipment, motors, appliances, fixtures, controls, guards, and other related systems have been labeled, tested, and balanced and the completed electrical installation is ready for its intended use.

At the final inspection, the Energy Code Compliance certificate must be posted near the electrical panel or air handler.

## **Mandatory Plumbing Inspections**

**GENERAL:** The Building Official, upon notification from the permit holder or his authorized agent, shall make the following plumbing inspections and such other inspections as necessary and shall either release that portion of the construction by signature at the appropriate section on the yard card, or shall notify the permit holder, or his agent, of any violations which must be corrected in order to comply with the codes, by issuing written "Notice of Violation" to the permit holder or posting such on the yard card. Do not cover anything without city inspection and written approval.

**UNDERSLAB PLUMBING:** To be made after trenches or ditches are excavated and all under slab drainage and water service and distribution piping and sleeves and protectants are installed and under required tests and before any backfill is placed. After passing this inspection, the trench may be backfilled, but another inspection is required before concrete can be placed.

**SEWER TAP:** To be made any time during construction, but before Meters inspection. This inspection is an open trench inspection of the exterior building sewer piping from the building or structure foundation edge, to and including connection to the public or site sewer. Sewer piping shall be inspected for proper bedding, fall, materials, fittings, cleanout positions, and connection to the public or site sewer.

**ROUGH-IN:** To be made with the framing rough-in inspection and after all drainage, waste, vent, and water service and distribution piping is in place and fastened and protected against physical damage. All concealed fixture connections shall be made, concealed piping insulation installed, rough trim boxes, enclosures, access panels / vaults secured in place, boots and flashings installed, required air or water pressure tests are applied and ready for inspection, and before any wall or ceiling membranes are installed.

**IRRIGATION:** To be made with the final inspection and shall include inspection of the irrigation system backflow prevention devices, system shutoff valves, and approved ground vaults in place.

**FINAL:** To be made with the building final inspection, after all public utilities have been connected and all plumbing fixtures are properly secured in place, properly trapped and connected to the drainage system; properly valved, protected against back siphonage, and connected to the potable water system; all water heating and other plumbing devices and appliances are connected, valved, vented, pressure protected, secured in place, insulated and sealed as applicable; and the completed plumbing system installation is cleaned and tested for proper operation; ready for its intended safe use.  
At the final, plumbing fixtures must be as specified in the Water Conservation Fixture Schedule.

## **Pools**

Pool building in Alpharetta is addressed under separate cover and not included herein. Pool Permitting Procedures may be obtained at our office or at our city website:

[www.alpharetta.ga.us](http://www.alpharetta.ga.us)

## **Additional Inspections**

**GENERAL:** Additional site, building, mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, or fire inspections may be required as determined by building and fire officials to insure compliance to building and fire codes and other related City, county, and state rules and regulations or laws.

Site inspections are required for all construction projects where an Engineering Permit ("Pink Card") has been issued, prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy or Completion for the permitted work. Site conditions are normally inspected by City Engineering Department personnel at or near the end of construction. Engineering inspectors will check the site for proper drainage, erosion control measures, landscaping and tree save requirements, and final condition of curb cuts, driveways, and side walks.

Items found to be incomplete, inadequate, damaged, broken, or otherwise not in compliance to City requirements must be completed and repaired to the satisfaction of all governing authorities.

In addition, inspections may be required by other governing authorities, who either at the planning, permitting, or during the course of construction have imposed regulatory issues to be resolved prior to Final approval.

Typical examples of these regulatory issues are Development, Zoning, Variance Compliance, City Boards, Health and Welfare, Property or Personal Liability, Financial, Arbitration or Court Order issues, etc..

No Certificate of Occupancy or Completion for permitted construction can be issued until all regulatory issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the building official.

## **Third Party Inspections & Reports**

Some jurisdictions allow permit holders to hire private inspectors or engineers to perform code mandated inspections that their inspectors may not be qualified to do or cannot do in a timely manner, per Georgia law. However, in Alpharetta, all City inspectors are codes certified and inspections are normally performed on the same day requested.

The City does not accept any written or verbal third party inspection certifications or approval reports for required inspections in lieu of City inspections without prior approval of the Building Official.

Sometimes construction conditions warrant opinions and guidance counsel of professional engineers or architects on how to proceed with codes compliant construction. Typical examples of these needs are when poor soils conditions are encountered that prohibit installing foundations in a normal fashion; or when tall walls or complex load bearing framing problems arise, etc..

When these or similar conditions are encountered, builders, owners, and City inspectors will normally briefly discuss conditions and inspectors will require a builder or owner to hire an engineer for guidance.

When this occurs, the City expects the hired engineer to visit the site, evaluate problems, offer options, and provide written professionally sealed repair orders to bring the construction into codes compliance. The City also requires the reporting engineer to provide the building official with copy of the repair orders for codes compliance review and signature. The City reserves the right to reject reports for reasonable cause.

When the building official releases the repair order by signature, the builder or owner is required to follow the repair order in strict detail and City inspection is required prior to covering any repair or pouring any concrete.

The reporting engineer or architect is required to make such repair inspections as he/she deems necessary, but may not approve covering repairs or approve construction to move beyond a point of written City approval.

## Written Release (Signing the card)

Construction normally proceeds in steps or stages, usually predetermined by the various mandated inspections sections included in this document. Steps may vary dependent upon the scope of work to be done and at the discretion of the building official.

**The important thing to remember when doing permitted construction in the City is to not cover anything up that has not been visually inspected and approved in writing by City inspectors.**

City inspectors and building officials will not approve any construction steps deemed necessary by the scope of work or the building official without first visually inspecting the work for codes compliance.

Work shall not be done on any part of a building or structure, or any mechanical, electrical, low voltage, plumbing, fuel gas, energy conservation, fire prevention, or other system beyond the point indicated in each successive inspection step without first obtaining a written release from building, fire, or other officials noted on the permit yard card or approved plans for that inspected work, as applicable.

Such written release shall be entered by inspectors on the permit yard card or approved plans and release shall be given only after visual inspection has been made of each successive step in the construction or installation as indicated by each of the foregoing inspections.

**If you want to know if you passed an inspection; - Visually Check your permit yard card for sign-offs.**

Work proceeding beyond the City written release point, regardless to reason or fault, shall be removed or uncovered or tested to the acceptance of building or fire officials or both.

No further inspections or written releases of construction shall be made, nor shall any Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion be issued for any construction, until the permit holder or property owner demonstrates codes compliance to the satisfaction of the building official.

## Stop Work Orders

Stop Work Orders are legal notices to immediately cease and desist all ongoing construction work on a property and to immediately and safely secure all hazardous perils to life and property on the site and to safely evacuate all work forces in an immediate orderly fashion.

Stop Work Orders are issued by City officials or other regulatory agencies and respected by all City departments.

Stop Work Orders are legally binding at issue and contractors and owners failing to immediately comply to a Stop Work Order and conditions stated thereon, will be issued a **Summons to Appear** for a public hearing in front of the Municipal Court to answer violation charges.

Stop Work Orders are the property of the City and shall not be removed from their posted location without written permission from the issuing official, under penalty of law.

Work may not resume on a site that has been issued a Stop Work Order until the order is rescinded by the building official.

## **Permit Time Limits – Expiration - Renewals**

Permits shall expire six (6) months from the date of issue if the permit holder fails to request and pass a required first inspection of the permitted work, whether or not construction has been initiated.

Permits shall also expire if the permit holder fails to request and pass a required inspection during any six (6) month period after any previous required inspection has been passed.

The building official is authorized to grant no more than two (2) permit extensions, not to exceed ninety (90) days each, during which time the permit holder shall request and pass a required inspection.

After the extensions authorized expire; the permit becomes null and void and new permits must be obtained if the planned work is to continue. New permits, fees, plans, and all work must comply to all codes, laws, rules, regulations, and policies in effect at the time of new permit issue.

Requests for permit extension shall be made to the building official prior to permit expiration, must be in writing, and shall show justifiable cause for the extension.

No inspections may be made on any site with an expired permit, nor will any Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion be issued for an expired permit, until such time as the permit is renewed.

Building Permit renewal fees are payable at City Building Division offices and are assessed as follows:

1. If permitted work is substantially complete, as evidenced by inspection records showing passed Framing and Meters inspections, as applicable to the scope of work permitted, the renewal fee is a set \$100.00.
2. If the permitted work is not substantially complete, as evidenced by inspection records, the renewal fee is one half (50%) of the Base fee assessed at original building permit issue, but not less than \$200.00.

Renewal of expired building permits does not automatically renew expired associated subcontractor permits.

Subcontractors are required to renew their expired permits, subject to the general rules stated above for all permits, except that subcontractor minimum renewal fees shall not be less than \$50.00 per permit.

If subcontractors different from the original permitting subcontractors are to complete the project, new permits must be obtained and standard subcontractor fees in effect at the time of new permit issue shall apply.

## Violations & More

Violations of building codes, construction regulations, and City laws are misdemeanors and violators may, in certain cases, be prosecuted to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Most violations occurring during permitted construction are usually processed by City inspectors issuing a builder a simple notice of violation (Red-Tag) and posting it on the permit yard card. The builder corrects the noted violations, recalls the inspection, the inspection passes, and construction continues undelayed.

There are some violations related to construction that are more serious in nature and that can cause expensive repairs, temporary or permanent termination of construction, or severe consequences to a violator's construction rights within the city.

**The three most common violations of this more serious nature are:**

1. Starting construction without required permits. (*Violation SBC §104.1.*)
2. Covering work without required inspections. (*Violation SBC §105.7.*)
3. Not calling and passing Final Inspection and obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy for the work, prior to occupancy or use of the permitted construction. (*Violation SBC §106.1.*)

The City does not process these three violations with a typical Red-Tag violation issued by a building inspector, but rather processes these violations by issuing Stop Work Orders. (*See Stop Work Orders section herein*)

**Starting Construction Without Permits:**

1. Construction found being built without first having city permits will be issued Stop Work Orders.
2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and state "***Violation SBC §104.1 – Work Without Permit***" or "***Violation UDC §4.4.5.A – Work Without Permit***", as it is also a violation of the city Unified Development Code (UDC) to begin any construction work without city permits, and will advise the property owner and contractor to contact the building official.
3. If workmen are on the violation site, they will be ordered to stop all work and leave immediately. If resisting this order, police assistance will be called immediately and violators may be arrested.
4. Continuing construction on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and/or the homeowner a "***Summons to Appear***" before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
5. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the building official.



### Covering Work Without Required Inspections:

1. Sites found covering work without required inspections will be issued Stop Work Order.  
**Examples:** Covering work without required inspections are; concreting footings without first passing a Footing inspection, or installing drywall without first passing a Rough & Framing inspection.
2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and will state "**Violation SBC §105.7 – Work Covered Without Required Inspection**" and will advise the homeowner and pool builder to contact the building official.
3. If workmen are on the violation site, they will be ordered to stop all work and leave immediately. If resisting this order, police assistance will be called immediately and violators may be arrested.
4. Continuing construction on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and/or the homeowner a "**Summons to Appear**" before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
5. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the building official.

### Failure to Request & Pass Final Inspection & Obtain A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) For Work.

1. Building sites found occupied and being used by occupants, without having first passed a city Final inspection and being issued a Certificate of Occupancy, will be issued Stop Work Orders.  
**Note:** It is a responsibility of the contractor and the homeowner to assure a Final inspection is passed and a Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the City, prior to using any structure.
2. Stop Work Orders will be posted on site and will state "**Violation SBC §106.1 –Occupied – No CO Issued**" and will advise the contractor and homeowner to contact the building official.  
**Note:** The building official will order immediate cessation of use in the interest of life safety, until the structure undergoes and passes a Final inspection to codes compliance.
3. Continued use of a structure on a site posted with a Stop Work Order will result to City officers issuing the contractor and the homeowner a "**Summons to Appear**" before the city Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
4. The Stop Work Order will remain in effect at the violation site until released by the building official.

## Penalties

Because of the life safety and property liability issues presented when structures are built without permits, work is covered without inspections, and structures are used without final inspections and certificates of occupancy being issued, which are all building code and city law violations; the City enforces strong penalties to discourage these actions and protect the health and welfare of the public.

For any violation regarding “performing work without first having a permit”; normal permit fees are assessed a 100% penalty fee, in addition to normal permit fees. (SBC §104.7.2.)

In addition, violation sites shall remain in a Stop Work status, until released by the building official.

**First Violation:**

1. Violation sites shall remain in a Stop Work status until the cited violation is corrected, inspected, and approved by city inspectors.

**Exception:** Violation trade repairmen and P.E. testing forces only may make required repairs and tests as required and prior approved by the building official.

2. Violators’ permitting rights, which are normally unrestricted, may be placed into a city imposed “Permitting Probationary Status” for a period of one year from the date of violation discovery or any other punitive action deemed necessary by the building official.

If at any time during the probationary period, violators are found violating the same previous cited code section, the violators’ city permitting rights shall immediately be revoked for cause, by the building official.

The building official will notify violators in writing of the above violation charges and conditions.

**Second Violation:** *(Same offense within one year probationary period.)*

1. Violators’ permitting rights will be immediately revoked, effective the date of violation discovery.
2. Violators will be issued a **Summons to Appear** before the Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
3. The violation site shall remain in a Stop Work Order status until the Municipal Court holds a public hearing and renders decisions regarding violation charges.
4. Violators’ permitting rights shall not be restored until so ordered by the building official.
5. The Stop Work Order shall not be released until so ordered by the building official.

In addition to the above, violators may be subject to severe fines, imprisonment, both, or other penalties as ordered by the court.

**Third Violation:** *(Same offense within one year probationary period.)*

1. Violators’ permitting rights shall be immediately revoked by the building official for a period of time not less than one year, effective the date of violation discovery.
2. Violators will be issued a **Summons to Appear** before the Municipal Court to answer violation charges.
3. The violation site will remain in a Stop Work Order status until the Municipal Court holds a public hearing and renders decisions regarding the violation charges.
4. Violators’ city permitting rights will not be restored until so ordered by the building official.

5. The Stop Work Order shall not be released until so ordered by the building official.

In addition to the above, violators may be punished by fines of up to \$1,000.00 per day or by imprisonment of up to 120 days, or both, or to labor on the streets, sidewalks, squares, or other public works for a period not exceeding 120 days, or by fine, imprisonment, or alternative sentencing as provided by law.

## **Appeals**

Any owner, contractor, subcontractor, or their authorized agent receiving notice from the building official may appeal a decision of the building official.

Appeals must be in writing and must be received in this department within 15 days of receipt of notice.

Appeals must be addressed to the Director, Community Development Department, 2 Park Plaza, Alpharetta, GA. 30009.

The appeal notice must state the location of the property in violation, the date of the Notice or Order received, and the number of the Notice or Order received.

The appeal must state the relief requested, the reason therefore, the hardship or conditions upon which the appeal is made, and must be signed by the appellant.

## **Additional City Construction Requirements**

**TEMPORARY TOILET FACILITIES:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.G* -All construction sites within the City shall be provided with temporary sanitary nonsewered (portable) toilet facilities for worker use during construction and such toilets shall remain in place until construction is complete.

**Exception:** Where permanent toilets are provided on site for workmen at all times.

For detached one and two family dwelling and townhouse construction, one (1) portable toilet shall be provided for up to four (4) work sites provided all work sites being served are within two hundred feet (200') walking distance of the unit.

Inspections will not be made without portable toilets or permanent toilets being in place and in a sanitary condition, as required.

The developer or general contractor of a permitted construction site shall be responsible for providing and maintaining required toilet facilities throughout the duration of construction.

**STRUCTURAL FILL AND BACKFILL:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.H* -Materials used for structural fill and backfill under and directly adjacent to buildings, drives, and walks and for backfill behind foundation and retaining walls

shall be unfrozen, unsaturated natural soils, clean and free of organic matter, silt, large rocks or stones, or foreign matter and debris.

Additional backfill materials used may be course gravel, crushed natural stone, or sand free of silt, loam or soluble materials, or any combination of the above.

Structural fills or backfill shall not be placed on subgrades that contain frost, mud, or are frozen.

In lieu of specific written direction and supervision by a Georgia licensed professional architect or engineer, fills shall be placed and compacted in loose layers of 6"-12" thickness and shall be compacted using sheepsfoot rollers, vibrating tampers, or other compaction equipment suitable to obtain the required density throughout the entire layer being compacted.

Fills and backfill shall be installed systematically and as early as is possible to allow for natural settlement and shall not be placed over wet, spongy, or porous subgrade materials.

**CUT OR FILL SLOPES:** Per *UDC 4.4.5.H* – The top or bottom of any cut or fill slope in excess of one foot vertical rise to three foot of horizontal run (1:3) shall not be located any closer than two feet (2') horizontal measure from the edge of drives, walks, paved areas, or retaining wall top or toe of wall.

The two foot (2') area adjacent to drives, walks, paved areas, tops or toes of retaining walls shall be graded at a plus or minus (+/-) 2% slope (1/4"/ft.) and where feasible shall slope away from the paved surfaces and walls.

**SITE WALL SAFETY BARRIERS:** Any portions of detached site retaining walls over four feet (4'-0") in height, as measured from the top of wall to the exposed lower toe of wall, must be provided with a continuous safety barrier mounted at or immediately adjacent to the top of the wall at all reasonably accessible areas.

Safety barriers shall be of substantial construction for the intended prevention of access, must be at least thirty six inches (36") in height, as measured from grade at the base of the barrier to the top of the barrier, and may be man made or vegetative in nature.

When vegetative barriers are used, they shall be of substantial maturity and density, at the time of Final building inspection, to prevent reasonable access to the top of the wall.

Site retaining wall safety barrier plan submittals shall include dimensioned drawings, with sufficient clarity, detail, and written explanatory notes to describe the nature of the work to be done.

## **Construction Working Hours**

See CODE OF ORDINANCES CITY OF ALPHARETTA GEORGIA - Section 26-116

## **Requesting Inspections**

The city makes every reasonable effort to provide permit holders “*same day*” inspection service.

In addition, City inspectors are “*cross certified*” to provide required multi-trade inspections by one inspector.

To effect this “*same day*” service policy, this department requires the person in charge of all construction work on a site, usually the general contractor or his superintendent, to call in all inspections.

*Exception: Where only one trade is involved in an inspection, such as an outside “Sewer” inspection, the hired plumber or utility contractor may call in this inspection.*

It is the responsibility of the person “in charge” to coordinate all building and subcontractor trade work, so that all required work for a particular requested/mandated inspection is ready to be inspected when the inspector arrives on site.

*Example: For a typical “Rough & Framing” inspection; all structure framing must be complete, plus all rough electrical wiring, plumbing piping, and HVAC ductwork and equipment must be complete and under required tests, and ready for inspection, prior to installing insulation, wall, and ceiling cover.*

All inspection requests shall be called in to the City Inspections Division at **678-297-6080**, between the hours of **7:30am – 8:30am**, on the same day that the inspection is desired. Callers will talk directly to inspectors.

**The City does not accept inspection requests at any other time.**

*Note: Inspectors cannot ascertain in advance the kind of inspections or how many inspections will be called in during any given day. Inspectors make every reasonable effort to service as many customers as is possible every day, however our inspection service is only as good as your preparation for inspection.*

When requesting inspection, a building permit number, site street address, and type of inspection requested must be given to inspectors. Without this basic information, no inspection can be scheduled. **No Exception.**

## **Reinspection Policy & Fees**

The city’s reinspection policy for any inspection is explained as follows:

Current city reinspection policy is to charge a customer a \$25.00 reinspection fee when inspectors have to return to a site for a second inspection of the same kind. The first inspection fee is covered under the original permit fee.

When inspectors must return to a site a third time for the same inspection, a reinspection fee of \$50.00 is charged.

Subsequent reinspections, fourth try, fifth try, etc., are charged a fee of \$100.00 per reinspection, until the inspection passes.

Habitual repeat offender reinspection fees may be increased for each offense, as authorized by the building official.

Reinspection fees must be paid before any reinspection.

Inspectors will normally cite up to five (5) code violations per inspection visit before deeming a site “Not Ready” for inspection.

When sites are deemed “Not Ready” by the inspector, the inspection is stopped, the permit holder is issued a Notice of Violation normally stating the violations noted thus far during the inspection, plus the words “Not Ready” are affixed to the Notice.

If receiving a “Not Ready” Notice of Violation, contact the inspector, as advised in the *Requesting Inspections* section herein, and discuss the inspection. Inspectors will normally tell you what to do to prepare for inspection.

**Warning: Inspectors are not construction “Punch List” preparers.**

If inspectors deem a permit holder is negligent in preparing for inspections and using inspectors to prepare Punch Lists, inspections will be suspended, the project will be placed in an “Inspections Hold” status and permit holders are required to schedule a meeting with the Building Official for instructions to resolve inspection issues.

If a scheduled inspection is Failed, permit holders must correct noted violations and recall the inspection when ready, but not before the next workday, unless so directed by the inspector.

## **Certificates of Occupancy & Completion**

Certificates of Occupancy and Certificates of Completion, hereinafter referred to as CO’s and CC’s, are building code required official documents issued by the building official to permit holders or property owners at the completion of construction that has been validly permitted through the Building Division.

CO’s and CC’s officially attest that the permitted construction has undergone all required inspections for compliance to building and technical codes and other applicable city, county, or state laws in effect at the time of permit issue and has been released for its intended safe use by the building official.

CO’s are issued for construction that is intended for human habitation, such as dwelling units or buildings. CC’s are issued for construction that is not intended for human habitation, such as pools, garages, or site walls. CO’s and CC’s will not be issued for any construction not permitted through the City’s Building Division. Fire Department officials cannot issue CO’s or CC’s for work permitted through the City’s Building Division.

There is no additional fee for CO’s or CC’s, as fees for these documents were included at permit issue.

## **Obtaining CO’s & CC’s**

To obtain a CO or CC at the end of construction, the permit holder or property owner must;

1. Pass all Final building and subcontractor inspections. (*Inspectors will sign yard cards when done*)

2. Obtain other City Department Final inspection signatures, as noted on the permit yard card at permit issue or during the course of construction. – i.e. – *Erosion, Civil, Arborist, Planning, Zoning, etc.*.
3. Obtain other governing authority Final inspection signatures or provide release documents, as noted on the permit yard card at permit issue or during the course of construction. – i.e. – *Fulton County Sewer, Backflow, Grease Trap, Health Dept., Ga. Dept. of Labor Elevator & Boiler, etc.*.
4. Proceed in person to the City Building Division offices during normal permit issue hours and present the building official with a completed and signed building permit yard card.

***Note:** At this point, staff will verify all signatures and copy the yard card and all documentation presented; check permit records to assure all subcontractor permits are in order; check for any liens, holds, or notices of record; and check for any unpaid fees or other issues to be resolved prior to CO or CC issue. It is the responsibility of the permit holder or property owner to resolve any issues presented during final review of all construction documentation.*

5. Sign required owner or contractor construction liability statements on the CO or CC.
6. Obtain the building official's signature releasing the construction identified upon the CO or CC.

**The issue of a CO or CC officially ends a permitted construction project in the City.**