



## Expedited Commercial Plan Review Program

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This establishes the policy and procedure for the Expedited Commercial Plan Review Program. The goal of the program is to expedite the review and approval of plans and issuance of permits for smaller commercial projects in existing buildings and Shell Buildings that have received final inspection approval.

### Program Criteria

- Projects that are being submitted for the 1st Plan Review Submission and have not previously been submitted and withdrawn.
- All Groups, excluding:
  - A. Assembly-Restaurants/Night Clubs (A2)
  - B. Indoor Sporting Events and Activities with Spectators (A4)
  - C. Outdoor Activities Participation/Viewing (A5)
  - D. Restaurants (B)
  - E. Hazardous (H)
  - F. Institutional (I)
  - G. Residential (R) Use Groups.
- Alteration/Repairs and Tenant Layouts with low complexity (see page 4) and a project area  $\leq 10,000$  square feet, except Assembly Use Groups (e.g., A1 and A3), the project area  $\leq 7,500$  square feet.
- Structural work shall be limited to minor structural alterations. Structural calculations and details are required for loads between 500 lbs and 1,500 lbs and suspended loads greater than 100 lbs per hanger. Minor structural alterations are defined as:
  - A. Structural support for Rooftop Equipment  $\leq 2000$ lbs and must comply with the Virginia Existing Building Code, Section 603.7 Structural.
  - B. Ceiling-hung transformers
  - C. Water heaters



- D. Interior equipment suspended from existing or new structural members
  - E. All opening widths must comply with the Virginia Construction Code, Section 1604.3 Serviceability and Deflection Limits.
  - F. Finished openings through load-bearing or masonry walls  $\leq$  6 feet in width
  - G. Finished openings through non-load-bearing or non-masonry walls  $\leq$  10 feet in width.
- Architectural/Building Plans and Structural Plans with calculations shall be prepared by a registered design professional (e.g., registered architect or professional engineer).
  - Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing and Gas Plans may be designed by a Registered Design Professional (A/E), Class A Trade Contractor, or Master Tradesman as allowed by Section 54.1-402 of the Code of Virginia.
  - Any misuse or abuse of the Program may result in the registered architect, professional engineer, or contractor being barred from the Program (i.e., submitting substandard plans, failing to attend the required meeting, failing to submit corrected plans or pull the Building Permit in a timely manner, and starting the construction without permits).

## **Plan Submission Process/Requirements**

1. Submission Requirements – The plan submission shall include: the [Expedited Commercial Plan Review Application](#); the [Tenant Layout, Alteration and Repair Commercial Plans Checklist](#); the [Filing Fee](#), the [Zoning Approval](#), the [Accessibility Certification Statement Form](#); [Address Validation](#); and the [Asbestos Release Form](#).

The project must be submitted to the ePortal no later than 4:00 p.m. (EST) the Tuesday before the requested meeting to be eligible to request a meeting for the following Tuesday or Wednesday. (NOTE: Please see Plan Review Meeting Schedule section in reference to holidays.) The following is a summary of the preliminary review process:

- a. The Building Plan Intake Counter staff will conduct a Quality Control Review to verify submission completeness (ADR and Zoning is provided) and invoice the filing fee. All items and fees must be addressed within one business day to remain in the expedited program.



- b. After payment of the filing fee, the plans will be routed to the appropriate Plan Reviewers. The Plan Reviewers will perform a preliminary review to determine if the plan is suitable for the Expedited Review meeting.
  - c. The County staff will confirm the status of the Expedited Commercial Plan Review Meeting no later than the Friday after application and will:
    - i. Provide the date/time of the meeting and provide a comment letter with deficiencies that are to be corrected before the meeting; or
    - ii. Indicate the preliminary review deficiencies are too extensive, and the plans will be placed in the normal review process with a comment letter to follow, after all reviews are complete; or
    - iii. Indicate the project is too complex for the Expedited Commercial Plan Review Program, and the plans will be placed in the normal review process with a comment letter to follow, after all reviews are complete.
2. Plan Review Meeting Schedule – The Plan Review Meetings will be scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday of each week at 9:00 AM (EST) and 1:00 PM (EST) via Microsoft Teams with the following exceptions: Thanksgiving week; Christmas week; New Years Day; Juneteenth, Independence Day; and Veterans Day. Additionally, if a County holiday occurs on a Thursday or Friday of the week prior to the meeting, the project must be submitted via the ePortal no later than 4:00 p.m. (EST) Monday of the week before the meeting.
- If there are conflicts between meeting time requests, the priority will be based on the order in which the project was received and QC approved by the County. Only two meetings may be utilized per project per week. A project is defined as the same development (example: Creating multiple tenant spaces in a Shell Building or shopping center).
3. Virtual Plan Review Meeting – The purpose of the Plan Review Meeting is for the Plan Reviewers to provide comments that can be corrected by the designer(s) during the meeting. Therefore, all the pertinent designers are required to be present at the meeting. If all the required designers are not present within 15 minutes of the meeting start time, the meeting will be canceled, and the plans will be placed in the normal review process.



4. The designers shall have their plans available digitally during the meeting and make their own changes on their plan sheets. If the designer is a registered design professional, the design changes must be clouded and the plan sheet must be sealed, signed, and dated. If the designer is a Contractor/Tradesmen, the design changes shall be clouded, signed, and dated. At the conclusion of the meeting, the revised sheets must be uploaded to the Plan Case via the ePortal.

Upon final plan approval, a conditional approval letter will be sent to the applicant requesting any additional documents required for permit issuance. It is highly recommended to include the contractor's license or [Statement of Exemption](#) (where permitted) during initial submission to expedite permit issuance after plan approval. Upon all required documents being provided, the Building Permit fees will be invoiced, and the permit will be issued upon payment. The trade permits associated with the project may be issued after issuance of the Building Permit. **If technical issues cannot be resolved at the meeting or the review exceeds the allotted meeting time**, the plans will be placed in the normal review process with scheduling based on a start date of the date of the meeting.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** Will plans already in the system be allowed to be resubmitted as an expedited review?

**A:** No. The overall goal of the program is to reduce the average Plan Review Times and the average number of submissions to obtain a permit. Therefore, it is critical to maximize the value of the Expedited Commercial Plan Review meetings each year.

**Q:** Can I submit plans to this program in advance of the preceding Tuesday?

**A:** Yes, plans can be submitted ahead of the deadline.

**Q:** If the plan is deemed not suitable for the meeting or approval at the meeting cannot be achieved, what is the start date for the normal review process?

**A:** A plan found to not be suitable for the program will be routed starting on the date of QC approval. A plan for which approval cannot be achieved at the meeting, the standard routing will start on the date of the meeting.



**Q:** Can a Framing and Rough-In Permit be issued once the preliminary review has been completed?

**A:** Yes.

**Expedited Plan Review Program - Project Complexity Table**

<b>LOW PROJECT COMPLEXITY (Expedited Plan Review Program)</b>	<b>HIGH PROJECT COMPLEXITY (Normal Plan Review)</b>
General Practitioner’s Medical Office	Dental Office, Hyperbaric Chamber, Surgical Suite, Imaging Suite (CT, MRI)
Minor Repair Garage: Shop providing service brakes, AC, tune ups, and fluid changes.	Major Repair Garage: Shop providing service for body repair, painting, engine overhaul, and work involving draining of the vehicle fuel tank.
Factory Use F2	Factory Use F1
Picture Frame Store	Woodworking Shop
Dry Cleaning Drop-off/Pickup	Dry Cleaning Plant, Laundromat
Tax Preparation Office (General Office)	Data Center
Engineering Firm Office (General Office)	Laboratory
Barber Shop	B Use Restaurant