
Subject: University Building Official Office

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the policies and procedures covering the University Building Official (UBO) Office at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and serves as a charter for the office.

2. Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Visitors and the university administration that university facilities are designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) standards and the applicable accessibility codes, as well as related laws and regulations promulgated by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

2.1 Scope of the Building Official and Office

The permanent and temporary construction, renovation, and maintenance governed by state or university regulations of any facility on university-owned property must be reviewed by the University Building Official for compliance with the VUSBC, referenced codes, and the architectural accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The university reserves the right to request the services of the Virginia Department of General Services (DGS) as appropriate. Specific functions of the University Building Official Office may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Coordinate with other university departments and staff to ensure an understanding and compliance with the building code requirements
- Review of construction drawings and details for conformance to the requirements of the building code and Virginia Division of Engineering and Buildings notices for state-owned property
- In the course of inspections, the University Building Official will make note of deviations from university standards and report them to the appropriate offices in Facilities

- Issue and manage building permits for construction activities where applicable and required by the VUSBC
- Conduct construction phase inspections as required by the VUSBC
- Issue certificates of occupancy for new structures following successful inspections
- Provide review and/or inspections for temporary construction such as tents, stages, and amusement devices as required under the VUSBC and Virginia Amusement Code
- Provide support to university staff to determine building safety and condition of university-owned facilities or structures in the event of fire, flood, or other structural failure
- Temporary assignments and/or special projects as allowed under the Management Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the university pursuant to the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act (“Management Agreement”)
- Provide oversight of Hokie Stone inspections as part of the inspection process of existing buildings

2.1.1 Organizational Structure

The Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Visitors has the responsibility to oversee and evaluate the construction, renovation, and maintenance of university buildings, structures, and facilities. Accordingly, the University Building Official has a reporting and policy relationship to the Committee and also serves in a staff role to the Committee. For administrative oversight of the University Building Official’s Office function, the University Building Official reports to the university’s Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer (AVP&CFO).

2.1.2 University Building Official Qualifications

The University Building Official shall be a full-time employee of the university, a registered professional architect or engineer, and certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development to perform the Building Official function.

2.2 Independence

Independence is essential to enable the University Building Official function to accomplish its purpose. Accordingly, the University Building Official has direct and unrestricted access to the President and the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The University Building Official shall be functionally independent of all university operations.

The University Building Official, as well as review/inspection staff, shall not be assigned to routine university operating duties unrelated to the building code function. In accordance with the Management Agreement, no individual licensed professional architect or engineer hired under the university’s personnel system as a member of the review unit or contracted with to perform these functions shall also perform other building code-related design, construction, facilities-related project management or facilities management functions for the university. In addition, members of the University Building Official Office will not develop and install procedures, prepare records, make management decisions, or engage in any other activity which could be reasonably construed to compromise their independence. The University Building Official or members of the office shall not be assigned any additional supervisory or oversight responsibilities which could be reasonably construed to compromise their

independence. Therefore, the University Building Official and appraisal procedures do not in any way substitute for the responsibilities assigned to other persons in the organization.

2.3 Authority

The University Building Official has unrestricted access to all university building records, reports, activities, and property. Access and information shall be related to building code enforcement and construction necessary to discharge their enforcement responsibilities. The University Building Official will exercise discretion in the review of records to assure the necessary confidentiality of matters that come to its attention.

2.4 Responsibilities of the University Building Official

The University Building Official has primary responsibility for the proper management for, and enforcement of, the VUSBC to ensure that construction, renovation, and code-governed maintenance projects conducted on property owned by the university are completed in compliance with the code, related laws and regulations, and this Policy Statement.

The University Building Official is specifically charged with, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- Coordinating and hiring department management and personnel for the University Building Official Office, and ensuring the office is staffed with licensed professional architects or engineers who are certified by the Department of Housing and Community Development in accordance with the Code of Virginia.
- Developing, submitting for approval, and executing comprehensive annual and long-range plans to carry out office responsibilities.
- Establishing a program for selecting and developing the human resources of the office.
- Establishing and maintaining a review program to evaluate the operations of the University Building Official's Office.
- Establishing and maintaining a program to maintain staff education, certification, and competency in their fields of expertise.
- Establishing written policies and procedures for the University Building Official Office and directing its technical and administrative functions.
- Issuing building and trade permits for each capital project as required by the VUSBC to have a building or trade permit.
- Issuing building and trade permits to non-capital projects when required by the VUSBC to have a building or trade permit.
- Establishing a program of permit inspection and compliance verification in accordance with the VUSBC.
- Documenting appropriately the results of all reviews, permits, inspections, reports, and evaluations performed.

- Determining the suitability for occupancy of, and issuance of certifications for, building occupancy for all capital projects requiring such certifications.
- Coordinating and maintaining contact with the State Fire Marshall, the Department of Housing and Community Development, other municipal building officials, other university/college building officials, the state building official, and other state agencies as required to insure inspections and approvals as required by the building code and related laws.
- Such other duties as required to fulfill the office of the Building Official as required by the VUSBC.
- Reporting to and coordinating with the Board of Visitors, the Vice President for Administration, and the Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer with respect to the duties, responsibilities, and progress of the University Building Official Office on a regular basis.
- Issuing an annual summary report of activities to the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Visitors.
- Communicating directly with the Buildings and Grounds Committee any matters considered to warrant its attention.

2.5 Annual Reports

The University Building Official will issue an annual report at the June Board of Visitors meeting that identifies the code enforcement and building permit activities performed during the prior year. The format and style of the report will be developed by the University Building Official, depending upon the nature and conditions surrounding the activities.

The Annual Report, as well as most reports on special projects, will be issued to the members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the President, the appropriate Vice Presidents of the university or their designee, the Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer or their designee, and other appropriate management personnel, as deemed necessary by the University Building Official. In addition, reports approved at open meetings of the Board of Visitors shall be made available to the public in accordance with State statutes. In certain circumstances, the University Building Official may decide, with the approval of the Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee and to the extent allowable by Freedom of Information laws, to restrict the issuance of an audit report to certain members of management and/or the Committee.

2.6 Responsibility for Corrective Action

In the event a project, building, or trade permit results in nonconforming work that is in violation of the Building Code, the University Building Official may issue a Notice of Violation as detailed in the appropriate section of the VUSBC. The Notice of Violation will be issued to the Project Manager or responsible party who requested and was granted a building or trade permit for construction. A copy of the Notice of Violation will be sent to the Vice President for Administration and the Associate Vice President and Chief Facilities Officer.

The department to whom the Notice of Violation was issued is responsible for taking remedial steps to achieve compliance and to provide, or have provided, a written response to the conditions reported. The responses should be submitted to the University Building Official within 30 calendar days of the issuance of the Notice of Violation.

2.7 Coordination with External Agencies

The University Building Official will coordinate the office's efforts with those of other state and local building code and related regulatory agencies by participating with, and coordinating with, the agencies to provide comprehensive, cost-effective building code enforcement for the university. Duplication of work will be avoided as much as possible. The university reserves the right to request the services of the Department of General Services (DGS) as appropriate.

2.8 Special Projects

The University Building Official is empowered to conduct special projects, reviews, or investigations at the request of the university President or his designee, or the Buildings and Grounds Committee. All special projects shall be reported to the Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

3. Procedures

The University Building Official shall be empowered to establish office policies and procedures in keeping with university policy, the building code, and the laws related to the building code. The office policies and procedures shall provide for a consistent process of project review, client communication, permit issue and management, and inspection issue management. The policies and procedures are subject to revision as changes are made in the building code or improvements in the process are recognized.

4. Definitions

Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC): The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) is a state regulation promulgated by the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development, a Governor-appointed board, for the purpose of establishing minimum regulations to govern the construction and maintenance of buildings and structures. The provisions of the VUSBC are based on nationally recognized model building and fire codes published by the International Code Council, Inc. (ICC). The ICC model codes are made part of the VUSBC through a regulatory process known as incorporation by reference. The VUSBC also contains administrative provisions governing the use of the model codes and establishing additional reference codes and standards as well as requirements for the enforcement of the code by the local building departments and other code enforcement agencies.

5. References

- The Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code
<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/index.php/va-building-codes/building-and-fire-codes/regulations/uniform-statewide-building-code-usbc.html>
- Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, Code of Virginia, §§ 23.1-1000 through 23.1-1028
<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter10/>
- The Management Agreement Between Virginia Tech and the Commonwealth of Virginia
- University Policy 5405, Non-capital Construction, Renovation, Maintenance and Repair of University-owned Facilities
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/5405.pdf>

- University Policy 5406, Requirements for Temporary Facilities/Tents/Stages/Amusement Devices
<http://www.policies.vt.edu/5406.pdf>
- Virginia Division of Engineering and Buildings
<http://dgs.virginia.gov/DivisionofEngineeringandBuildings/tabid/55/Default.aspx>

6. Approval and Revisions

Approved November 8, 2010 by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

- Revision 1

Revised to incorporate code-governed maintenance inspections and to address temporary facilities and amusements.

Technical updates to titles and references.

Approved September 1, 2016 by Vice President for Administration, Sherwood G. Wilson.