

S o u t h a m p t o n C o u n t y
D e p a r t m e n t o f C o m m u n i t y D e v e l o p m e n t

Construction Document Policy

In accordance with Section 54.1-410 (B) of the Code of Virginia and under the general authority of the 2009 Virginia Construction Code also known as and hereafter referred to as the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC), the Southampton County Department of Community Development here by establishes this official **Construction Document Policy** to ensure construction documents submitted under Section 109 of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) are prepared by an Registered Design Professional (RDP) in any case in which the exemptions contained in Sections 54.1-401, 54.1-402 or 54.1-402.1 of the Code of Virginia are not applicable; when construction documents, that are exempt under Sections 54.1-401, 54.1-402 or 54.1-402.1 of the Code of Virginia, are prepared and sealed by a Registered Design Professional; or in any case where the building official determines it necessary.

The following policy is to govern the preparation and information required on all construction documents prepared by Registered Design Professionals and those prepared by persons exempt under Sections 54.1-401, 54.1-402 or 54.1-402.1 of the Code of Virginia when submitted to the Southampton County Department of Community Development under Section 109 of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) for consideration of a construction permit.

1. All construction documents shall *bear the name, and address of the author, and his occupation.*¹ All construction documents prepared by a Registered Design Professional (RDP) including supporting drawings, plans, specifications or calculations shall bear the seal of the RDP plus the signature of the RDP and date the seal was affixed on the documents.
2. All construction documents prepared under the exemptions in Section 54.1-402 (A) of the Code of Virginia must meet the prescriptive code sections of the adopted model codes for the Virginia Residential Code (VRC) or the Virginia Building Code (VBC).²
3. All construction documents, plans, drawing, shop drawings, detail drawings, specifications, or designs, prepared under Section 54.1-402 (B), for: any ***unique performance design*** (as determined by the building official) of structural elements for *floors, walls, roofs or foundations; or any building or structure classified with respect to its use as high hazard (Use Group H), must be designed and sealed by a RDP.*³
4. ***Unique performance designs*** are by-their-nature outside the prescribed scope of load path systems designs in the prescriptive code sections found in the VRC and VBC. Section R301.1.1 ***Alternative provisions*** of the VRC and Chapter 16, ***Structural Design***, of the VBC reference the standards required for ***unique performance designs***. Therefore, loads indicated in Section 301.1 of the VRC and Section 1603.1 of the VBC *shall result in a system that provides a complete load path that meets all requirements for the transfer of all loads from their point of origin through the load-resisting elements to the foundation.*⁴ The load path system must be designed using the performance method illustrated in Chapter 16 of the

¹ Code of Virginia § 54.1-401 Exemptions

² The Va. 2009 USBC VRC § R301.1 Application and §301.1.1 Alternative provisions

³ Code of Virginia §54.1-402 (B) and Va. 2009 USBC VRC § R301.1 Application and §301.1.1 Alternative provisions

⁴ The Va. 2009 USBC VRC § R301.1 Application

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VBC.⁵ Chapter 16 of the VBC requires the Construction Document to indicate the placement of each element of the design and demonstrate its capacity to carry all of the accumulated loads through *a complete load path that meets all requirements for the transfer of all loads from their point of origin through the load-resisting elements to the foundation.*⁶ The International Residential Code is the model code for the VRC. Its introduction states, *this comprehensive stand-alone residential code establishes minimum regulations for one and two-family dwellings and townhouses using prescriptive provisions.*⁷ The International Building Code is the model code for the VBC. Its introduction states, *this comprehensive building code establishes minimum regulations for building systems using prescriptive and performance-related provisions.*⁸ Both codes clearly state they are using the minimum regulations for building code systems using prescriptive provisions. Prescriptive code load path systems are designed to work in conjunction with other prescriptive code elements. Prescriptive code load path systems should not be assumed to carry the loads of **unique performance design** elements and therefore, cannot be utilized in a **unique performance design**. Where engineered design is used in conjunction with these standards, (VRC Chapter 3) the design shall comply with the **International Building Code (VBC Chapter 16).**⁹

5. This is not to exclude the elements of a prescriptive load path system from being used in a **unique performance design**, only to prohibit the use of the prescriptive code as a substitute for comprehensible performance design data for the complete **unique performance design** load path system.
6. The RDP will be required to submit all standards, charts, tables, calculations, industry or manufacturers specifications and installation instructions, and shop drawings indicating the placement, location, and size of all anchors, bolts, reinforcements, tie-downs, hold-downs, attachments or other **unique performance design** structural elements, necessary to construct or assemble a design *that meets all requirements for the transfer of all loads* (as described in paragraph #3 of this policy) *from their point of origin through the load-resisting elements to the foundation.*¹⁰
7. A list all third party inspections required by the USBC for the proposed construction and all of the information required by the Southampton County Third Party Inspection Policy must accompany the construction documents.
8. Modifications must follow the Southampton County Code Modification Policy. Modifications are to be requested at the plan review stage and must accompany the construction documents.

⁵ The Va. 2009 USBC VRC §301.1.1 *Alternative provisions*

⁶ The Va. 2009 USBC VRC § R301.1 *Application*

⁷ The International Code Council, 2009 International Residential Code, Introduction, p. iii

⁸ The International Code Council, 2009 International Building Code, Introduction, p. iii

⁹ The Va. 2009 USBC VRC § R301.1 *Application*

¹⁰ The Va. 2009 USBC VBC §1601 Structural Design General §1603 Construction Documents and §1604 General Design Requirements