



## DIVISION OF CONSTRUCTION

### VIRTUAL INSPECTIONS

Washington County is implementing Virtual inspections, an alternative to in-person inspections, enable prompt service, productive follow-ups, and scheduling most types of inspections. Virtual Inspections will be essential for most occupied residential structures during the current State of Emergency. Virtual inspections are conducted between a Virtual Inspection (VI) Representative and Division of Construction Inspector by using a video call on a smart phone, tablet, or other webcam enabled device. All inspections, including Virtual Inspections, are performed Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM – 3:30 PM, excluding holidays and preapproved After Hour and Saturday Commercial Inspections (fees apply).

#### Minimum Requirements

- All building-related inspections (building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing) may be considered for virtual inspections, including occupied residential structures, however, based on the size and/or complexity of the project it may not be possible to conduct virtually.
  - **Note: ALL REQUESTS FOR VIRTUAL INSPECTIONS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSPECTION STAFF PRIOR TO SCHEDULING THE INSPECTION.**
  - Inspection complexity will be determined by the inspector.
  - For inspections deemed too complex for virtual completion, County staff will discuss other options that will permit the project to have inspections in a safe manner.
- Customers must have a host device such as a smartphone, tablet, or webcam enabled device connected to Wi-Fi or 4G wireless service.
- FaceTime (Apple OS devices) or Zoom (all devices) is required to host the video call. Check your mobile device's app store to download.
- If the project has a building permit for work being conducted, all approved plans must be onsite and available for review to the inspection staff during the video call.

#### Process

**1. Schedule** your inspection. All virtual inspections must be scheduled in advance in the same manner for an inspector site inspection by contacting the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System at 240-313-2488, contacting the office at 240-313-2460- press 1 to schedule an inspection, or utilize Accela Citizen Access at <https://acela.washco-md.net/CitizenAccess>. During the scheduling process leave a message for the inspector with the following information:

- VI Representative Name – the person who will be walking the inspection site
- VI Representative Cell phone number
- VI Representative E-mail address
- Method of video call you intend to use for Virtual Inspection (FaceTime or Zoom)
- **NOTE:** If leaving a voice message to schedule an inspection at the office number, you will also need to provide the following information:
  - Permit number

**80 West Baltimore Street | Hagerstown, MD 21740 | P: 240.313.2460 | Hearing Impaired: 7-1-1**

- The work address
- Type of inspection being requested

**2. Prepare** for your virtual inspection:

- Make sure your host device is fully charged. Turn off host device notifications. Notifications can freeze the video during the call and could cause delays or require the inspection to be rescheduled.
- Ensure you have the necessary tools (based on the inspection type) readily available. For example, a tape measure, screwdriver, level (4ft for building & plumbing/ torpedo for plumbing), thermometer, GFCI tester/ voltage tester, ladder, device to test smoke/ carbon monoxide alarms and/or flashlight. A selfie stick is recommended.

**3. Contact** with an inspector:

- The inspector will contact the VI representative at the cell phone number provided during the inspection request and give you an approximate time or 2-hour window that the inspection will take place.
- At the time of inspection, the inspector will contact you via the video call host platform chosen by the VI Representative during scheduling.

**4. Accept** the incoming video call initiated by the inspector at the scheduled time.

**5. Walk through** your inspection with the inspector, follow all directions from the inspector. Be sure to note the following (if applicable):

- Confirm your name and work address
- Confirm all tools related to inspection are available for use
- Begin at street view looking at structure with the address and/or permit placard showing.
- Walk the inspection in a clockwise direction.
- Walk the inspection from top to bottom to follow load path or follow all trades to their point of entry or origin.
- Virtual Inspection Representatives are encouraged to make note of any items that require correction during the inspection.

## **Inspection Results**

- The inspector will advise at the end of the video call if the inspection has passed or failed.
- Typically, results are processed in the permitting system a short time after the inspection has concluded but no later than the end of the day on which the inspection occurred.
- Results can be viewed utilizing Accela Citizen Access at <https://accela.washco.md.net/CitizenAccess> however for better efficiency it is highly recommended taking notes during the inspection.
- If the inspection failed, the inspector will determine if a re-inspection fee will be issued. This is an official inspection conducted by the Division of Construction and all standard inspection requirements still apply, such as the site must be accessible, the items requested must be ready for inspection, etc.